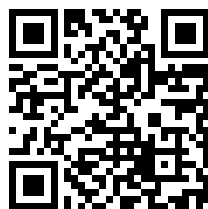

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

GoogleTM books

<https://books.google.com>





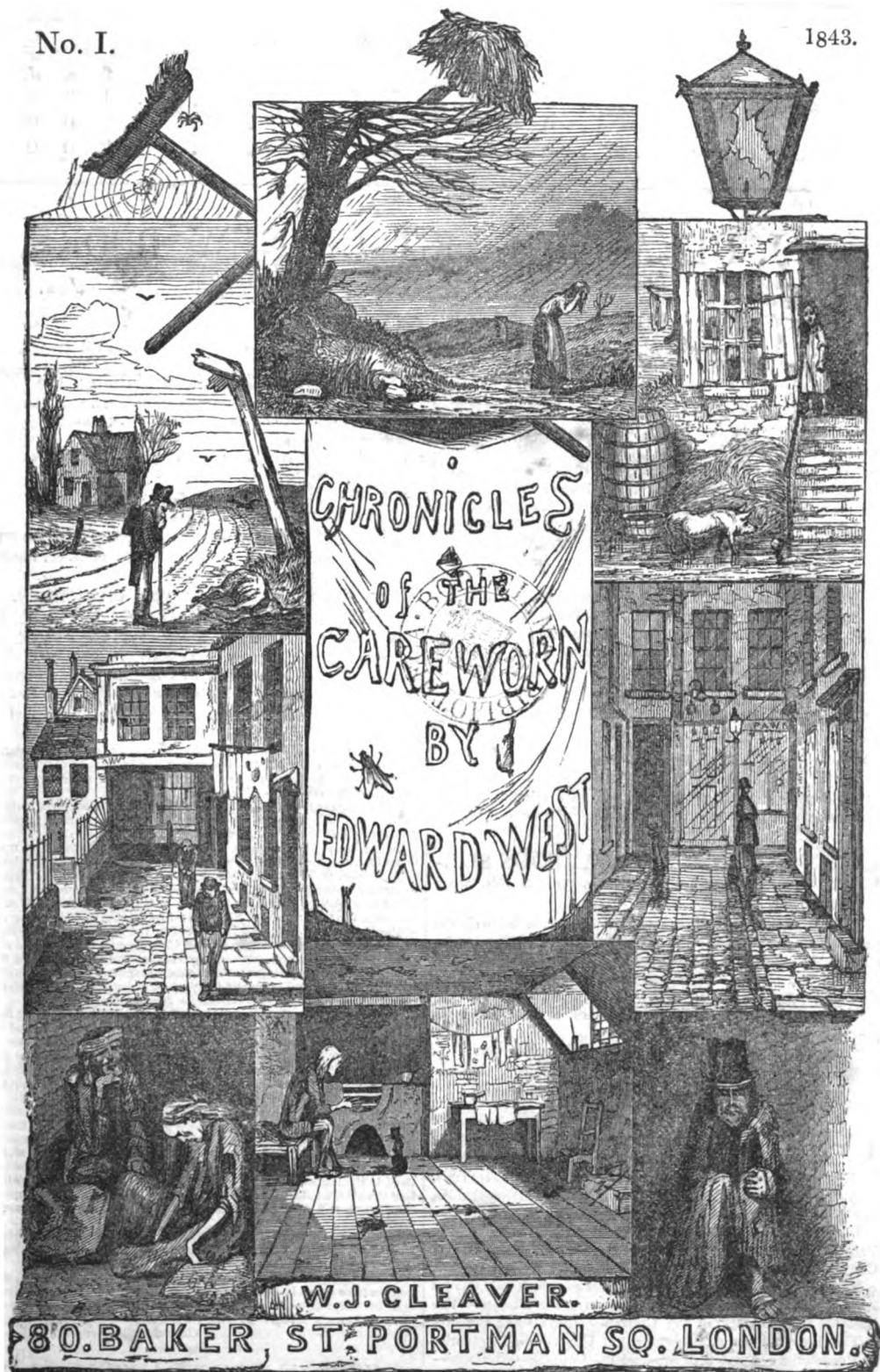
5. ⑤.

73.



No. I.

1843.



And Sold by
EVERY BOOKSELLER AND NEWSMAN IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.
PRICE THREEPENCE.

RICHARDS, PRINTER, 100, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, CHANCERY CROSS.

Digitized by Google

TERMS OF ADVERTISING.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
Six lines	0	5	0	Half-a-page	1	3	0
Every additional line	0	0	9	A page	2	0	0
Quarter of a page	0	12	0	Bills	2	0	0

W. J. CLEAVER'S LIST OF NEW BOOKS.

BAKER STREET.

Jan. 1843.

REV. WILLIAM BENNETT'S WORKS.

Now ready, third edition, in 1 vol. 8vo. price 13s. cloth.

ERRORS OF ROMANISM.—LECTURE-SERMONS on the Distinctive Errors of Romanism, preached in Lent 1842.

"Such lectures as these are the most powerful means of impressing on the minds of the people right views of the important subjects on which they treat."—*Morn. Herald*, March 28, 1842.

"Let these lectures be well read, and extensively—Churchmen will then be fully armed, and in readiness to repel the encroachments of Rome, and her efforts to regain her former usurped supremacy."—*Church Magazine*, April.

"The manner in which this subject is treated is kind and considerate, but firm and uncompromising. We earnestly recommend a perusal of these lectures to all those who really wish to know the precise differences which exist between the Churches of Rome and England."—

2

A GUIDE TO THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

In two vols. 18mo. cloth, price 8s.

Vol. 1. Meditations for Home.

Vol. 2. For Use at Church.

"We warmly recommend these volumes as a valuable gain to our stock of devotional reading."—*Christian Remembrancer*.

3

SERMONS ON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS, with Introduction, Notes, &c. 2 vols. demy 12mo. price 14s. boards.

"Mr. Bennett's Sermons are not to be confounded with the run of such publications at this day, than which nothing can be more feeble. They are the composition of an able and thoughtful mind, and contain earnest and practical remarks, clothed in plain and natural language."—*British Critic*.

"These Sermons could not be heard without producing some practical good."—*British Magazine*.

"Sound practical Sermons."—*Christian Remembrancer*.

4

WILLIAMS'S ECCLESIASTICAL ANTIQUITIES.

Now publishing in Numbers.

CYMRU.—The Ecclesiastical Antiquities of the CYMRU, or the ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH, its History, Doctrine and Rites. By the Rev. JOHN WILLIAMS, M.A. Incumbent of Trinity Church, Llanfor, Merionethshire, and Vice-President of the Institut d'Afrique de Paris.

Under the above title, is now publishing a series of Interesting Tracts, illustrative of the character of the Ancient British Church during its metropolitical independence.

The following are some of the subjects on which valuable information will be given: The Introduction of Christianity—The National Establishment of the Church—Dioceses and Parishes—The Foundation and Endowment of Churches—Sanctuaries—Monasteries—Apostolical Succession—Councils—Heresies—Persecutions—Martyrs—Saints—Liturgy—Fasts and Festivals—Marriages and Divorces—Burials—Oaths—Intercourse with Foreign Churches—Independence of Rome.

No. 1. Bardism	2	0
2. Introduction of Christianity	0	6
3. National Establishment of the Church	0	6
4. Councils of Arles, Sardica, & Ariminum	0	8

5

THREE SERMONS, explaining the New Marriage Act, with regard to Churchmen and Dissenters. 12mo. price 6d. and 1s. By the Rev. Wm. Bennett.

Nearly two thousand copies of these Sermons were sold in a few months, and reviewed by numerous periodical writers.

6

PUSEYISM.

Fourth Thousand, price 1d.

PUSEYISM; a Short Dialogue between a Lady and a Parson. Foolscep 8vo. 1d. or 4s. per hundred.

7

THORNDIKE'S ARMOUR FOR CHURCHMEN.

A DISCOURSE ON THE RIGHT OF THE CHURCH IN A CHRISTIAN STATE. By HERBERT THORNDIKE, B.D. formerly Prebendary of Westminster. Printed in 1649. A New Edition, with an Appendix, General Index, &c. and Preface by the Rev. J. S. BREWER, M.A. Queen's College, Oxford, and Assistant Minister of Ely Chapel, Holborn. In 1 vol. demy 12mo. 8s. 6d. cloth.

"The literary public, but especially the student in theology, are much indebted to Mr. Brewer for his seasonable reprint of this scarce and valuable reprint, which ranks among the foremost in the array of standard English divinity."—*Times*, Dec. 21, 1841.

"As our most learned and pious Thorndike, of blessed memory, has evinced in different places of his writings"—*Bishop Bull*, quoted in *Dr. Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford*.

"This truly learned work will prove useful to those who may be brought into contact with Presbyterianism; and every one who, like Mr. Brewer, undertakes the laborious work of editing such reprints, is deserving of our gratitude."—*Irish Ecclesiastical Journal*.

"A new edition, edited by the Rev. J. S. Brewer, of a work of high reputation in the Church of England—first printed in 1649. The object of the author was to draw a line between the spiritual and temporal supremacy claimed by Calvin for the Church, and the temporal supremacy over the Church claimed by Hobbes and others for the State. Thorndike has been resuscitated to take his share in the present Puseyite controversy; and to one of the parties, at least, the new edition will no doubt be welcome."—*Westminster Review*, No. 73.

"The public are greatly indebted to Mr. Cleaver for putting forth a new edition of this old and scarce book, in an excellent type and form. The date of the treatise confers a value on it. We rejoice to see there is a call for such works. The old divines are, as yet, superior to the modern, and we may, we trust not irreverently, apply to their works the parable 'no man having drunk old wine straightway desireth the new, for he saith the old is better.'"

"Men's minds were never more forcibly drawn to the examination of the Church's right, than at that epoch of our history (1649): the question was a practical, not a speculative one! it was one with which all their dearest and most immediate interests were bound up, and with respect to which, consequently, their intellects and industry were sharpened to the highest degree of perfection. The controversial history of that period constitutes a spiritual armory, to which the champions of the Church will ever do well to refer for the weapons of their arduous warfare."

"To have read and studied Hooker will not furnish a dispensation from the expediency, we may almost say necessity, of reading and studying Thorndike."

"Although we have noticed this work at considerable length, we feel that we have scarcely done it justice; it deserves to be carefully studied, and no Churchman's library can be complete unless it contain THORNDIKE'S RIGHT OF THE CHURCH IN A CHRISTIAN STATE."

Church Intelligence, 3d Aug. 1842.

8

C HERRY'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE FASTS AND FESTIVALS.—A Course of LECTURES delivered in the Parish Church of Burghfield, Berks, by the Rev. HENRY CURTIS C HERRY, M.A. Rector, and Domestic Chaplain to the Right Hon. Lord De Saumarez. Vol. 1, foolscap 8vo. boards, 4s. 6d.

"We highly recommend these lectures."—*Christian Remembrancer*.

THE SAINT ANN'S SOCIETY.

Patrons.

THE QUEEN.
The Queen Dowager.
The Prince Albert.
The King of Hanover.
The King of the Belgians.
The Duchess of Gloucester.
The Duchess of Kent.
The Duke of Sussex.
The Duke of Cambridge.

This Society, by *voluntary Contributions*, wholly maintains, clothes, and educates the Children of those *once in prosperity*—orphans or not—from all parts of the world.

The *Half-Yearly Election* will take place on the 9th February next.

New Subscribers become entitled to votes, and the other privileges of Governors.

Executors of Benefactors by Will become Life-Governors according to the amount of the Bequest.

Subscriptions most gratefully received by

EDWD. FREDK. LEES, *Secretary*.

2, Charlotte-Row,
Mansion-House.

SADDLERY AND HARNESS, HORSE CLOTHING, &c.—Bazaar, King-street, Portman-square. Every Article manufactured at this Establishment, being sold at the lowest possible price consistent with the best quality of materials and workmanship, will be found 25 per cent. under the usual Trade charges.

Just Published, in post 8vo, price 10s. 6d.

THE HANDBOOK OF NEEDLEWORK.

By Miss LAMBERT (of New Burlington-street).

A complete Guide to every kind of DECORATIVE NEEDLEWORK, CROCHET, KNITTING, and NETTING, with Illustrative Woodcuts.

JOHN MURRAY, Albemarle-street.

HISTORICAL GROUP, in Magnificent Armour; the Prince and Princess Royal, in their splendid Cot; the King of Prussia; Commissioner Lin and his Consort, modelled expressly for this exhibition by Lamqua of Canton, with the magnificent Dresses worn by them; the gorgeous Coronation Robes of George IV, designed by himself at a cost of 18,000*l.*, with the room fitted up for the purpose; is acknowledged to be the most splendid sight ever seen by a British public.—Admittance, 1*s.* Open from eleven till dusk, and from seven till ten.—Madame TUSSAUD & SONS—Bazaar, Baker-street, Portman square.

NEW WORK BY CAPT. KNOX.

On the 1st of January 1843, price One Shilling, to be completed in Twelve Monthly Numbers, the First Number of

HARRY MOWBRAY, by CAPT. KNOX, Author of "HARDNESS," "DAY DREAMS," &c. &c. with Illustrations by WEIGALL.

London: JOHN OLLIVIER, 59, Pall Mall: BELL & BRADFUTE, Edinburgh, S. J. MACHEN, Dublin.

W. J. CLEAVER'S LIST OF NEW BOOKS (*continued*).

9

MOSHEIM'S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, New Edition.—INSTITUTES OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, ANCIENT AND MODERN, by JOHN LAWRENCE VON MOSHEIM, D.D. A new and literal Translation from the original Latin, with copious additional Notes by JAMES MURDOCH, D.D. Edited, with additions, by HENRY SOAMES, M.A. Rector of Stapleford Tawney, with Thoydon Mount, Essex. In 4 vols. 8vo. 6*s.*

It may be as well to state, that this new edition of Mosheim contains an addition of some three hundred pages by the editor; and it is hoped a work, which has long been a standard authority in England, will now supply the acknowledged want of an ecclesiastical history, sufficiently able and extensive, from a native of the country, and a member of the national Church.

10

HUTCHINSON ON CHURCH MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS.—Plain SERMONS on the Church Ministry and Sacraments, by the Rev. CYRIL HUTCHINSON, M.A. Student of Christ Church, and Rector of Batsford, Gloucestershire. 1 vol. foolscap 8vo. price 4*s.* 6*d.* bds.

"Clear and plain spoken discourses, designed to prove the danger of alighting these means of grace."—*British Critic*.

C. M.'s WORKS FOR CHILDREN.

11

WILD FLOWERS FROM THE GLENS. By E. L. L. 1 vol. 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

"These tales possess great interest, and are likely to engage much attention. They are, in our opinion, to be preferred to the more correct, but less impassioned writings of Miss Landon, when she was skilled in author-craft."—*Bell's*.

"We strongly recommend our readers to pluck these 'Wild Flowers'; for the morale and wholesome admonitions to be derived from the contemplation of them, will be found far more salutary and beneficial than that which can be deduced from the rarest exotics."—*Morning Post*.

"Their merits recommend them to favour."—*Literary Gazette*.

12

By the same Author, Second Edition,

THE CHILD AND THE HERMIT; OR, A SEQUEL TO THE STORY WITHOUT AN END.

"An admirable story for children. The religious moral is excellent, and the beauty of the diction deserves high praise."—*Atlas*.

"Well fitted to enlarge and edify the minds of the young, by leading them to look through 'Nature up to Nature's God' with love and unlimited trust."—*Court Journal*.

"An exquisitely poetical little thing."—*Monthly Magazine*.

"A good and pleasant book for children."

Church of England Quarterly Review.

"No child can hear or read it with attention, without deriving from it the best and holiest impressions. Parents, who wish that the enjoyment of nature should be connected with distinct religious impressions, will find in 'The Child and the Hermit' exactly what they want."

Morning Chronicle.

"A very sweet production."—*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*.

"Its laudable object is to direct the first openings of the mind, and the earliest dawnings of infant curiosity into a pure and holy channel."—*Globe*.

13

SCOBELL'S CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS.—Six SERMONS on the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness, by the Rev. EDWARD SCOBELL, M.A. Incumbent of St. Peter's, Vere Street.

"We have here six eloquent discourses on that most interesting event in our blessed Lord's life—the temptation in the wilderness—which must have produced a most powerful sensation, when uttered by so able a divine and distinguished a preacher as Mr. Scobell."—*Christian Remembrancer*.

14

CLOSE'S FAMILY PRAYERS.—FAMILY PRAYERS, by the late Rev. HENRY JACKSON CLOSE, M.A. Second Edition, beautifully printed in a large and new type. 1 vol. royal 18mo. cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.*

"An excellent collection, well adapted to domestic use, for every day in the week."—*Atlas*.

"Pious Visions."—*Literary Gazette*.

W. J. CLEAVER, 80, BAKER-STREET, PORTMAN-SQUARE.

RICHARDS'S UNIVERSAL DAILY REMEMBRANCER FOR 1843.

FORMS IN WHICH THE WORK IS PUBLISHED :

January.—1843.	
MONDAY 2.	TUESDAY 3.
9s.	

THESE SIZES
ARE
LARGE 4to. POST,
PRINTED ON
THE
BEST WRITING
PAPER.

January.—1843.				
MONDAY 2.	Cash Ac.	RECD.	PAID.	
	Br. for.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
MEMORANDA.				
	Cr. for.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
9s.				

LARGE POST OCTAVOS, HANDSOMELY BOUND, RULED OR PLAIN.

MONDAY, JAN. 2, 1843.
7s.

Jan.—1843.
Monday 2.
Tuesday 3.
5s.

Jan.—1843.
Sund. 1.
Mond. 2.
Tues. 3.
Wedn. 4.
3s. 6d.

MOND. JAN. 2.	WEDN. JAN. 4.
TUES. JAN. 3.	THURS. JAN. 5.
6s.	

LARGE 4to. POST,
PRINTED ON
THE
BEST WRITING
PAPER.

January.—1843.		
Sund. 1.		
Mond. 2.	Wed. 4.	Fri. 6.
Tues. 3.	Thurs. 5.	Sat. 7.
4s.		

London :

RICHARDS, PRINTER, 100, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, CHARING CROSS.
And may be had of all Booksellers and Stationers, in Town or Country

In ordering either of the above Books, the price will sufficiently designate the size and form desired.

CHRONICLES OF THE CAREWORN.



ENTLE reader, before we commence an acquaintance which I desire to be one of a long continuance, it is highly expedient that there should be a perfect understanding between us. Let me then explain, briefly, to you, what description of person I am, and what are my sentiments and inclinations.

To the point, then: If you are anxious for a literary friend who shall describe the circles of fashion, as naturally as if he had visited them; who shall enumerate the names and the residences of the most finished tailors, and the most exquisite milliners in "the Great Metropolis," and connect bad English and broken French in indissoluble bonds; I offer no fair and legitimate claim to your friendship: I can but place in your extended hand the *Directory* and the *Vocabulary*, to occupy a position of which they are more worthy. Or, if your ardent fancy seek for a companion who can trace with eager solicitude each path made sacred by the footsteps of some illustrious hero, to whom Tyburn or the Old Bailey first proclaimed with a solemn voice that he was mortal,—to whose patriotic spirit his country's good and the goods of his countrymen were equally dear, and equally to be sought,—and who left a fame which man had no power to destroy, or, rather, I should say, to hang,—you must abandon me, or you must meet with bitter disappointment. I profess myself to be a friend, an advocate, an attentive observer of the poor man. I have been placed, by Providence, in the middle rank of life, without riches and titled parentage; without sufficient poverty to induce me to steal or murder, or connexions so degraded as to lead me to look up with admiration to a successful footpad or a prosperous housebreaker. I am not in that situation that I can affirm with truth, that I do not see the wants of the wretched, nor behold the virtuous strivings of the simple labourer:—when the eye of that Omniscient Being who is about my path is especially bent-upon me, it is also on the houseless outcast shivering by the wayside over which I am passing. When the eye of the Eternal is upon my well-stuffed and easy bed, and beholds me warm and comfortable beneath the capacious blankets, its gaze rests upon the man who has no better place on which to lay his aching limbs than the stone steps of my house-door. When his thoughts, his hopes, his prayers,

B

rise to Providence, that he may yet find some benefactor in his low estate, perhaps *I* am the individual respecting whom his wishes and his solicitations to Heaven are directed. Providence and myself are in his mind at the same moment, and in connexion together. Shall I dissolve, even in thought, this glorious union, and suffer his eye to fail with looking upward? Were I to neglect the poor man, I could not plead as a palliation of my faultiness, that such a spirit of indifference had descended to me from my forefathers. I cannot, dare not, allege such an excuse, when I recollect how my parents listened even to the faintest whisper of low-breathing poverty; the hours which we spent together forbid me, and much more, (alas! for my indolence in not accompanying them in their deeds of active benevolence), the hours which we did not so spend. By the recollection of the last words of one justly dear to me, I should tremble at such an apology; those words expressed his perfect good will to all men, such good will as the holy spirits feel in heaven. He had been conversing with the angels, and afterwards spoke of *good will* even as he spoke before; he found it to be the right word for his former feeling—*active kindness to all men*. Yes, dear guide of my youth! there are a thousand reminiscences, very minute and very trifling in themselves, which forbid me thus to speak, and to wrong thy treasured memory! Even the recollections of the meanest flower, which thou didst pause to gather for the beggar-child by the wayside, whose small thin arms could not reach it from amongst its companions in the wild hedge; and of the common straws, the two plaited straws, which thou didst gratefully receive, like a precious gift, from the wandering idiot girl! A breath could scatter the base accusation—a breath, light as that to which thou wouldst listen with so much pleasure, drawn in a gentle slumber by the o'er-wearied trampers!

I cannot plead that I am too humble or too insignificant to do anything for the poor around me; I can, at least, be as the little pauper child, who turns away from the offered cake to press the hand of that suffering relative who is at its side. Or, to descend still lower, I can be as the faithful and true-minded dog, which comes breathless to inform his friends that one he loves is lying by the wayside and dying amidst the snow, unnoticed by all else. Or, to place myself no higher than the inanimate creation, I can act as the grass-grown graves, at which the foot of the careless traveller may stumble, and cause him to know that he is treading upon those equally good and gifted with himself.

I meet with many men in my daily intercourse who despise and dislike the poor. These men harden themselves in their sternness, they stand fixed in their own determination, even as on a rock. It is useless for me to place before such men that tender object of sympathy, a helpless infant, without one rag to shelter it from the blast; they will use their ample cloak to hide their faces from the very misery which that cloak would cover. It is needless to tell them that the fire in the widow's cottage never burns, when they can make themselves joyful and happy in their cold stern-heartedness! For such men I can but feel unmitigated and unbounded sorrow. How truly pitiable

is he who at the end of a life, perhaps of fourscore years, falls asleep without being able to call to mind one act of benevolence.

Again, there is another class of people with which I am in the habit of conversing. If I tell them of the wretched poverty of some men, whilst others close to them are living in ostentatious grandeur and profusion, they reply that "there must always be differences of state and condition in this world," and are thereupon content. With equal reason, and with equal truth, might they answer, that the thirsty ground is parched with barren drought, whilst the clouds floating above it are bending heavily with water; that the water and the earth are apart from one another, and that therefore they ought to continue so; that the cloud is far higher than the ground; forgetting that the one is placed above the other solely for the purpose of fertilizing and blessing it. Such persons can look upon man, oppressed, derided, trampled upon, and ejaculate with a pious countenance, that "poverty is a blessing!" and truly it becomes so, if it teach the neglected outcast to bear with patience and with resignation, the sight of the hand and eye uplifted in hypocritical reverence to heaven, whilst they are withdrawn from the suppliant wretch who dies unnoticed, save by an all-seeing Providence. Such persons instruct the diseased and craving stranger that he has much to be thankful for to the Ruler of the universe. Yet, in their prayers, not one of the blessings for which they bid others thank heaven could find a place; nor one of such visitations, coming upon themselves, be included in their causes of thanksgiving. They tell others that they should bear with pleasure, sickness, poverty, neglect. Truly they place grievous burdens upon men's shoulders, for them to bear as valuable treasures; but they themselves would not touch them with one of their fingers. It is their doctrine, that the good are ever to be the despised and forsaken; and, accordingly, they are satisfied that the virtuous poor should remain so. These men's religion can allow *the rocks to be rent*, whereon the earthly joys of the lowly were founded; they can tolerate *the earthquakes*, which swallows up the dearest, most loved of the friends of others; they can permit *the graves* where the heart's affections rested peacefully, *to be rudely opened*; but they cannot consent that the *living bodies of these saints*—of the best and worthiest of their fellow-mortals—should ever arise to tranquillity, competency, or regard!

I have always felt deeply for the human miseries around me; but I did not, until about twelve months since, seek out distress, and follow it to its hiding places. An accidental meeting which I had in the winter of 1841, with a gentleman before unknown to me, was the cause of my looking attentively into the details of woe, and may be considered as the origin of the present publication.

This work is the result of the daily walks, and the occasional wanderings, during the last year, of one who professes himself to be a lover of the human race,—of one who can find beauty beneath the most homely of bonnets,—who can look for merit in the meanest of cottages,—who can sympathize with a sorrowful man, equally upon his couch of straw, as when upon a bed of damask,—

and would plead for him to whom the world denies the right to make known his tale of suffering and of misery.

When I have recently traversed the green fields and the pleasant lanes of that England,—which might be “merrie England,”—my attention has been more directed to the sigh which was scarcely heard amongst the way-side thorns, than to the spirit-stirring breeze that sported amid the lofty elms; and my eye has been riveted more firmly to the falling tear of the ill-paid artizan, than to the picturesque waterfall which was to most persons the attraction of the locality through which I was a wayfarer.

When I have passed along the crowded thoroughfares of England’s splendid metropolis, and have mingled with the throng that made its streets bright with gorgeous apparel and with gilded equipages, my gaze has singled out the wretched being to whom the right even to stand shivering there was denied; and in the thoughts of what the inmost feelings of that man must be,—of the happiness of which his mind is capable, and the misery to which his life is destined;—the glories of silks and satins, of chariots and horsemen, have faded into the dimness of the lot of that being, despised, sorrowful,—and immortal.

I have written down in sadness of heart the grief of the poor man, which I everywhere discerned; and I have also made real woes the foundation on which I have erected imaginary structures of sadness,—“castles in the air;” but alas! only like unto castles, in the dungeons which lie beneath them! I seek for the recompense of my literary labours in the sympathy of the public; but I shall not look for the rewarding smile on the countenance of the wealthy and the great alone: I shall also watch the faces of those who are the despised and the sorrowful; and if I notice a lighter look or a less tearful eye, I shall trust that my efforts are approved, and that in such a manner as I most desire,—even by inducing a gentler treatment towards those to whom the higher classes have the privilege of acting as guardian benefactors;—a privilege similar to that of the angels in heaven, who, in their own state of perfect happiness, can feel for the calamities of earth, and desire to look into these things, that they may, as ministering spirits, alleviate the miseries of mankind.

The circumstance to which I have alluded as first calling forth my *active* interest in the poor, occurred in the month of January last. On the morning of a clear, cold day, when the shining snow was covering pavement and roadway, and making the streets of London dazzle with unusual brightness, I was walking along leisurely (for I was enveloped in a capacious cloak, and warmed with sundry other protecting wrappers), through the western portion of the Strand, adjoining the entrance to the Lowther Arcade, when I was suddenly accosted by a gentleman with whom I am acquainted, and who had desired for some time previously to meet me, that we might adjust some matters of business in which we were mutually concerned. We agreed to walk together as far as Pall Mall, to which he was then upon his way, in order that, during our brief perambulation, we might arrange our commercial affairs. On our arriving at my acquaintance’s place of destination, which

was one of the club houses with which Pall Mall is so abundantly ornamented, he invited me to come in with him, that we might finish within doors the conversation which we had commenced without. I willingly consented to do so, being convinced that a good fire and a warm carpet were pleasanter, on a January morning, than an admixture of mire and snow, and a freezing and piercing blast.

Having entered the spacious and elegant room, we soon concluded our private discourse; and I was formally introduced to some of the gentlemen present, and commenced conversation with three or four assembled in a group, upon the usual subjects of debate which are so peculiarly "talked over" at the clubs of London: for instance,—when it was probable the severe weather would abate; the report that Mr. Jackson or Mr. Thompson had come over to "the opposition;" and the *bon mot* which a daily journal had manufactured for one of the leaders of the political circle. Somehow, in the course of dialogue, I mentioned the warm interest which I felt in the humbler classes, and expressed my belief that the sorrows of the poor were too little considered by the rich and the powerful. The greater portion of those who were present agreed with me in the urgent condition of the majority of the population, and affirmed that they were always willing to afford ready aid, when in their power to do so, and to give their money, when they felt certain of its being properly bestowed. Whilst those gentlemen were speaking thus kindly, and looking in a pleasing and friendly manner, I noticed one individual seated near the fire-side, uneasily reclining upon a large and comfortable arm-chair, and looking the very personification of mute wretchedness. I addressed him particularly, and stated my hope that he agreed with me in what I had said; to this remark, however, he made no reply, but rubbed his hands together with a violent effort, as if desirous of concealing some pain or annoyance which harrassed him, and rankled in his mind. I then apologised by observing, that I did not doubt he would render to the poor every kindness which he had the ability to bestow. Upon this he cast up his eyes with a look of desperate grief; sank back in his chair; and fixed his gaze intently upon the floor below him.

The whole appearance of this gentleman deeply interested me: I felt that there was something of a peculiar nature in his character or his circumstances which it would be very gratifying to my curiosity to discover. Of course, after my having twice directed my conversation to this silent personage, and obtaining no reply, I could not again address him; and wishing the members of the Club a good morning, set out on my walk back to my own residence.

I had scarcely, however, got into St. James's Street, before I heard a very quick footstep behind me; and, by a kind of instinctive knowledge, I was assured in my own mind that the gentleman who would not speak in company was anxiously in pursuit of me. I immediately slackened my pace, and a minute after, I felt a hand laid very gently and quietly upon my arm. I turned, and beheld him whom I expected, with eyes gazing upon

me as if he would read my inmost soul, with such a pallid hue upon his brow, that at once told me, more forcibly than ever, that a load of uneasiness and a burthen of sorrow were the portion of him who stood before me. "Can I speak to you?" he enquired nervously, and drew me towards him as he uttered the words. "Willingly," replied I: "most willingly;" and I naturally supposed that, upon gaining my consent, he would at once have poured forth the complaint which I knew was to be the subject of his approaching discourse. But far otherwise: it seemed, strange to say, that the words he had said—"Can I speak to you," were not addressed to me, but to himself; and that, intensely desirous as he was to communicate with me upon some matter of kindness and goodness, he was, as it were, kept back from doing so, by a force over which he had no control. At length, however, he ejaculated, "Yes, I think I *MAY* speak to you, since it is nothing more than *mere speaking*." I answered, "I shall be most ready to hear whatever you desire to tell me; and to render you whatever assistance I can in any concern in which you may be interested. 'I wish to Heaven I were you!' he exclaimed with intense emotion. "Do you envy me then my riches, which might be contained in a nut-shell, or my influence, which is confined to one ill-paid servant?" "You said you *could* serve me! I *could not* serve you if you lay dying before me!" "What do you mean?" I asked. "Will you hear my sad story," he replied. I bowed assent, and he commenced as follows:—

"I was born of rich, and, of course therefore respectable, parents, in Manchester-square. From my earliest childhood, I never knew what it was to have a wish, that wealth could gratify, remain ungratified. My father and my mother loaded me with money, in order that I might buy anything which pleased me when I was out walking, without consulting them as to the propriety of the purchase. My toys and playthings were of the most costly and sumptuous description. My earliest recollection is of my mother telling one of the numerous maid-servants, who waited upon me, as an obedient slave, not to let me *fill* my mouth with the shining sovereigns which lay scattered before me. I was a petted and spoiled child. If I kicked, as I frequently did, the terrified domestics, and doubled my little fist in infantine rage, these actions were applauded; were considered great and clever by my tender parents; and I was fondly called a 'king.' Bitter satire upon the deeds of monarchs! Alas! that the too fond affection of misguided relatives, and the abject reverence of hirelings, should have been the means of working out a severe and enduring misery! When I was led along through the public streets, decorated with tinsel, and adorned with velvet and satin, my humble attendants assured me of my own mightiness—they perpetually repeated that I was a good boy—and that the beggars, who lined the streets of London at the period when I was a child (some thirty years ago), should not come to me; and when we passed some hapless infant, sobbing from the cold, and from the nipping hunger which fed upon it, I was instructed to look upon it as a 'naughty child, because it was crying.' Accustomed thus to despise those who supplicated my help in their hour of misery, I had very quickly an equal contempt for the domes-

tics whose duty it was to do my wayward bidding. I became a tyrant in heart and mind, and utterly regardless of the feelings of all whom I believed to be lower than myself. If I chose to call a servant a brute or a wretch (words which I often applied to them), he or she was so considered by my doating friends,—and, of course, I thought myself justified in using the terms, and that they really were appropriate and proper. I fancied myself a second Adam, and that whatever name I called anything, that was the name thereof. So did my early days of childhood pass away!—And as I grew to be a young man, I resolved, firmly and fixedly, to gratify myself in every manner that I possibly could, and to regard no person living besides myself. I carried into very good effect, I can assure you, the determination to which I had thus come. My every idea was centred in myself—my own pursuits—my own follies—my own vices. I had upon one occasion been paying a visit at a house where I was very intimate, in Somerset Street, and was just coming out of the street door, overwhelmed with kind wishes and kind words, and bowed down to as an idol, by the giant-heighted footman who escorted me to my place of exit, when, turning into Oxford Street, I passed a jeweller's splendid shop. His window displayed most costly and sumptuous articles: brooches and rings, seals, and watches, were scattered about in elegant admixture: so arranged, as if negligently, to set off in a brighter manner the merits and the charms of each. I paused to survey the gold and silver ornaments, to which I had had a great predilection from my early days. I cast my eye particularly upon a ring which was certainly of great beauty, both on account of the stone which was set therein, and of the elaborate and chaste workmanship. After what I have told you, you will readily imagine that, since I liked the ring, I would have it for my own property; although I had some fifty similar baubles in my trinket-cases at home. No sooner had the jeweller named the price than the money (and it was a large amount) was placed upon the counter; and, having deposited the ring in my pocket, I walked leisurely and proudly out of the shop. As I left the door with the change (some guineas and silver) out of a note of considerable magnitude, a girl came up to my side, and she begged me (I think I can hear her voice at this moment!) for the love of the blessed Heaven, to assist her sick mother, who was lying upon the bare boards at home, without a piece of fire-wood by which to warm her aged limbs—with hardly a rag to protect her emaciated form. The girl entreated me, also, to have pity upon herself. She told me with a languid voice, and with the brightness (alas! that brightness!) of sad consumption, deepening into a more brilliant glow upon her cheek—she told me,—and her high cheek-bone and her transparent skin bore their too real and too beautiful testimony to the truth of what she spake,—that she herself was fast descending into the cold and silent grave, without the common wants and requirements of abject necessity.

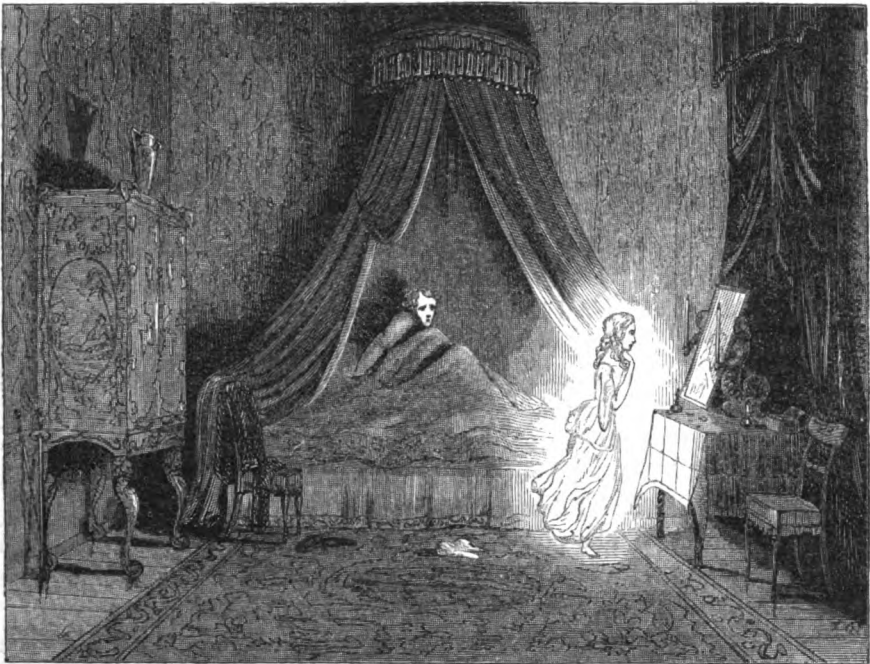
“ ‘The hand of death is upon me,’ were her words; ‘and the only hope that the medical gentleman holds out to me of my life is to take nourishing food, and to take every care of myself.—And, Sir, I walk about the streets of

London with my naked feet upon the wet ground and the cold stones, till night comes on; and I carry home, perhaps, just enough to procure one morsel of food—and my old mother is starving and ill; and I bless Heaven that I have been so happy as to get something from begging throughout the long day; and I give my poor old parent the bread; and I lie down and famish until the morning light calls me to go out and entreat for mercy all the day, and to bear back with me at night the copper that I have gained; or to return without a farthing to aid my old mother, who helped me when I could not help myself!"



"The girl begged me as if it were for life,—and indeed so it was. She urged me 'for the sake of the mother who had nursed me.' But no mother had ever nursed me. My mother had given me gold in abundance; but hirelings had nursed me. All her persuasions failed in their intention and their aim. She begged me, 'as I hoped for mercy,' and my mind proudly spurned at the language. '*I hope for mercy!*' I exclaimed to myself; 'why the girl must take me for one of her own sort! It is mine to bestow, if it please me to do so; it is for others to cringe and to supplicate. Slaves have ever bowed down before me as a god, who had the right to crush them, if he willed to do so. I have moved, the sun of an universe, which brightened and freshened in

my smile. Shall I be talked to of having mercy—pity—shown to *me*?' I drew in my hand, which yet held the money which the jeweller had given me back in change,—for in listening to the poor girl my attention had been diverted from the recollection that I had such a sum of money displayed to public view,—and I returned the gold and silver to the elegant purse in which they were to rest till the next fancied bauble called them forth to the light of that sun, which fulfils his work of benevolence at the will of his *merciful* Creator. I retired to my own sumptuously furnished apartments, and sat down by myself to a very costly and tasteful dinner. Viands of exquisite flavour were placed before me by attendant menials; wines of the most celebrated vintages were poured out, as the water of the brook. I indulged my epicurism to my heart's content; and ate, as if Heaven had sent the blessings of plenteous earth solely for my enjoyment and sensuality. I consumed (being induced so to do by the excellence of the repast), sufficient for two persons, or perhaps for three; utterly regardless, then, of the dying girl and her sick and famishing mother, each of whom would have blessed me for ever for a portion of the meat of which I so abundantly partook.



“After my dinner was finished I sought my dormitory. When I had extinguished the lamp, and had lain down upon my easy bed, I began (as was my wont), to think over the events of the day past,—not for the sake of meditating, and making myself wiser or better by the retrospect; but simply for the purpose of lulling myself to sleep. Suddenly I beheld a bright and clear light shining around my couch: it made all parts of my large room—

c

even the remotest corners—so very luminous, that I could have distinguished the minutest object; and opposite to me, in the centre of a globe of radiance, more dazzling even than the splendour upon all sides, a figure stood erect. Its eyes met my eyes,—fully, stedfastly, intently. ‘Pshaw!’ said I to myself, ‘it cannot be a person—it cannot be a substance—it is but a shadow: it is so thin, so very, very thin;’ and I drew the covering over my face as I spoke thus. ‘But yet,’ my memory said, ‘*that girl* was a mere shadow! she was thin!—she was very thin! she was so very, very thin, and no doubt her mother at home, too—although I did not go to see her—was a shadow likewise—they’re dreadfully thin, miserably thin! If it were not for that girl, and for her old parent, who was so ill at her lonely garret, I should believe that thing before me was a mere fancy of the mind; that it could not really be a person: that it was impossible it could be a substance. I would give the world to forget that girl and her sick mother!’ I raised my head from under the sheet, which I had drawn so carefully over it, and I looked firmly forward. ‘Nonsense!’ said I in a loud voice, as if to assure myself of the truth of what I *heard* from my own lips; ‘perhaps,’ and I attempted to laugh,—‘perhaps I see nothing but my own clothes, which, by some chance light admitted through the shutter, appear to me to be a person. It must be so. Yet, this appearance cannot be formed of *clothes*,’ continued I, deep in thought, ‘because it is so like that poor girl whom I met; and she had hardly any covering to shield her form (and that form was small enough, withering by consumption), from the cold wintry storm and tempest.’ And I strained my eyes to comprehend the object before me; and the more scrutinizing my gaze, the more certain did I become, that it was in very deed the girl whom I had neglected when I was coming out of the jeweller’s shop, or at least, that it was her shadow,—the shadow of a shadow! I stared wildly at her; and she looked (hers was no immodest stare), she looked back again at me; but it was not that same look now, which it was when I met her in Oxford-street—when I repulsed her (so spake memory), as I was bearing off the ring which had cost me many guineas, and of which by the time of retiring to my couch, I had become utterly wearied. Then it was an earnest, anxious, supplicating, beseeching look;—now it was a fixed one. There was no concealing from my own mind the knowledge of the truth: I determined to treat it as a fact, and philosophically to reason upon it. ‘The girl has died,’ I said calmly, ‘of course she has died.’ ‘But why, *of course*?’ I enquired, warmly and suddenly of my own heart. ‘Why of course, you fool? why of course?’ And upon this point I became desperately angry with myself at my own rash and unjustifiable conclusion. ‘You always,’ said I to myself aloud, ‘you always determine things at once upon mere supposition, without any grounds whatever. You will never hear the other side in any matter; you will never listen to what another person has got to say; you did not listen to the poor dying heart-broken girl this morning, when she spake of her starving, perishing mother.’ I threw myself back upon my pillow in bitter grief, and in reproachful sorrow. I took up my handkerchief which was by my side, and I covered my face with

it, in order to hide from my view an object altogether so unpleasing as that which I beheld; but the handkerchief had a very powerful scent of the bouquet which upon that very morning I purchased at Rigge's in New Bond Street, the most fashionable perfumer (at the period to which I allude) in all London—purchased for a larger sum than would have made the dying girl comfortable and happy,—warming her mother's cold room; providing her with food and medicine; and clothing herself and her parent with the raiment of protection from the stormy weather; therefore I threw to the further end of the room the fragrant handkerchief, with a feeling of indignation against my own folly and hard-heartedness. I raised myself up in bed once more, and the spectre no longer stood regarding me as she had heretofore done, but (still more horrible in the appearance), she stood exactly opposite to the looking-glass upon the table facing my couch, and she gazed upon *herself*, in precisely a similar manner to that in which I had looked into the jeweller's shop. By the ghastly light which emanated and streamed from herself, she contemplated her hollow and emaciated form. She smiled pleasedly at the sight of her own wasted and miserable figure; even as I had smiled at the now hated baubles which adorned the elegant window of the fashionable dealer in expensive ornaments.

“‘It is impossible for me to sleep,’ said I distractedly, ‘with *that* object in my room; it would be absurd to suppose it; but when the dawn of morning comes, it will vanish into emptiness, and I may then have peace and rest. So saying, I turned upon my face and pressed my eyes against the pillow, to be assured that I could see nothing whatever by any conceivable chance. And so did I remain through that long and dreary night, which seemed to me as if it occupied an age of bitterness and woe! In the morning, when the mighty sun had risen, dispensing life and glory from his resplendent brightness, I started up, happy to think that, for a season at least, the spirit which awed me had departed; and that until night again cast her dark mantle over all things, there was tranquillity and calmness for my worn and troubled mind. But alas! no!—There was the very same figure!—It was now a *dark* outline amidst the light, whilst before it had been a light amidst the darkness. The poor girl, to whom I refused a copper coin, when I had lavished so freely my gold upon a despised and almost forgotten bauble—remembered not, save for her—had passed from that scene in which day and night have aught of change or of importance. Hers were now the pleasures of indivisible and unnumbered ages!

“I at once comprehended that this spectre was to be *ever* with me; in joy (should I again know joy), and in woe—in life and in death. And so it has ever been! But oh! worse, far worse than this!—when I take my daily walks, through our crowded thoroughfares (as I am now doing), and behold some being of attenuated form, and pallid countenance; some creature whom to see, causes at once our pity and our sighs; one labouring with sickness and sorrow, which wrestle with him but to conquer; one bowed down to the very dust with the weight of accumulated grief and miseries; then does my whole

soul melt with compassion at the sight which is before me, and I experience in myself the sincerest desire to mitigate his wretchedness and to minister to his urgent necessities. I pause, to whatever place I may be hastening,—whether upon some business of almost vital importance to myself, or upon some errand from which I expect to derive much amusement and diversion—I stop instantly; I dash my hand into my pocket, and I draw out my purse to give bountifully, as much as I can afford to bestow; aye, and even more than my ample fortune authorises. *Then* does this girl (for she is ever with me) withdraw my hand from the hapless beggar, with a force before which I am utterly impotent; and like as it once drew back from the dying and beseeching girl, so does it now turn away from the fresh object of misery before me. Yes! often do the weighty drops of death-like perspiration fall from my clay-cold forehead in my earnest struggle to bestow my money upon the distressed, whilst that spirit compels me to refrain from giving. I would part with the wealth of worlds if I possessed it, and would count that mountain of gold as a very little thing—as a worthless pebble cast into a sea of pleasures—if I were allowed to afford something of my fortune to the poor man, and to gain a beggar's blessing. But in vain,—for ever in vain!

“When I set out upon any excursion whatever, with the soberest and steadiest of intentions,—it may be to visit a cottage-home, or to call upon some venerable and beloved relative,—if I pass a jeweller's or a perfumer's shop which displays the vainest and most worthless baubles of finery; the ornament which I am aware I shall cast away within an hour after I possess it; or the scents and the oils which are utterly useless to me when I have bought them; and if when I look upon these bagatelles, I observe that they are marked at prices exceedingly high and exorbitant, then do I from my heart despise the trash which I observe before me, and condemn as very foolishness the conduct of those persons who could spend even a tithe of the sum required by the shopkeepers upon objects so little worthy of the regard of any wise and discerning man.

“‘These,’ I exclaim, ‘are pitiable absurdities: can the dealers expect to find any individuals weak enough to purchase them?’ At the same moment whilst I am looking with utter contempt upon the trifles before me, my hand dives into my pocket in search of the large sum of money required to put me in possession of them! Yes! at the very instant that I am despising from my inmost soul the childish gew-gaws, and am, with the stern resolve of conscience, endeavouring to clasp tightly in my hand the gold which I have drawn forth from my purse, does that girl, that ever-living girl, with her cold, thin, icy, pallid fingers, force open the palm that was firmly closed, and compel me to give quickly (as I never gave to her), the ill-used lucre, for the empty bauble. I give it with an appearance of eagerness, such as she evidenced whilst she prayed me for life and comfort, when she was in the agonies of death, and almost in the blackness of despair. So passes away my life, which has become to me a burthen and a curse, a struggle, doomed to end in hopeless wretchedness! Fancy to yourself, my kind friend, fancy to yourself—for I am sure

that you will feel for my wretchedness, and will sympathize with my misery,—that you had heard of some case of utter and urgent desolation; that the hearth that once was lively and joyous, was now cold and cheerless; that the widow sat all the livelong day, and through the dark and silent watches of the night, with nothing to look upon but the corpse of him whom she had loved when living, and now mourned over when dead; and then imagine that you experienced, in the bitterness of reality, and the depth of suffering, the wretchedness of the fate to which you were destined! of inability to mitigate the distress which you beheld, although the treasures of wealth were yours; and that a power, an unearthly power, doomed you to look upon the sick and the dying, upon the bare walls and the bleak rooms, and to turn away to lavish your riches upon the tinsel ornament, and the worthless bauble! Such grief rests like a mountain upon my heart! pressing upon and crushing my inmost spirit; and whilst I groan beneath the weight above me, I could not for the life of me give a drop of cold water to cool the feverish lips of the parched and perishing pauper, were it possible for that drop of water to be pressed out of the stony rock of my hard-heartedness. So passes a life which is hateful to me; and so will it pass! She who avenges fearfully upon my fated head the wrong which I did to her, when she walked a despised and forsaken creature of earth, has passed through time, and has arrived at that state in reference to which change is a name, and alteration a term which mocks us in the using.

“The chain which binds man to his species is not *utterly* broken within me; it is dissolved between me *and the living*! it is fearfully firm and fast betwixt me and *the silent dead*! It is my doom, during the period of my continuance in the world, to be for ever advancing, for good; and for ever retreating, for evil. I appear to myself to be some mighty engine, in which the works are carried on continually and powerfully! Alas! these movements tend to no glorious and no happy end; to no beneficial or prosperous purpose; but merely to the entangling still more and more, and to the crushing, most painfully and most surely, this sad and ruined mind, and this wearied and prostrate body. I feel, for a certainty, that I am about to quit this life, and to lay my harassed frame in the still tomb; but when I shall seek to make restitution for my past misconduct, and to leave to some noble purpose the wealth I have inherited—but not enjoyed—the cold fingers of that girl will guide my trembling hand, and I shall bequeath the whole of my great possessions to erect some splendid mausoleum to my own selfishness and infamy!”

During the foregoing recital of the miserable condition of the gentleman with whom mere chance had brought me acquainted, we had walked together through several successive streets. Just as he was at the conclusion of his narrative, I felt him draw me with great violence to a shop window, where many expensive but gaudy ornaments were displayed.

I shall never forget the appearance of his livid and distorted countenance, distracted as he was with the inward struggle and violent workings of his mind. He pointed out to my notice a chain of massive workmanship, with a price marked upon it, far, very far, beyond its actual value. “I *must* buy

it," he exclaimed, with a cold shudder. "It is heavy and clumsy in its pattern, it is extravagantly dear, but it will cost me a very large sum, and *therefore* I must buy it."

"Come away," I replied; "leave the useless and tasteless bauble; and let me show you how you can easily bestow your money upon objects that will satisfy and upon pleasures that will be enduring."

"It is in vain," he whispered; "*she* is with me."

He tore himself with an effort from me, as I endeavoured to hold him back, and rushed into the jeweller's repository. I was entering the door after him, but he earnestly besought me to depart. "You have seen," he said wildly, "my weakness—my insignificance—my folly—wait not, I implore you, to behold my punishment and my disgrace."

I turned away with a sorrowful heart, and retraced my steps towards St. James's Street. "Poor fellow," I exclaimed, deep in my meditation; "poor fellow! he was brought up from childhood to think but for himself, and to make his own happiness the one object of his search. Fearfully has he been taught to think for others, and to know that true pleasure can only be attained by sharing our joys and comforts with those around us. I do trust, however, that in *this* instance he may yet gain the mastery, and leave the dealer with his costly ware unsold."

Whilst I was thus talking to myself, I cast my eye down one of the short cross streets upon my right, and I quickly recognized at the farther end of it, hurrying along with an agonized countenance, like that of a murderer bearing the body of a victim for which he was desirous to find a hiding-place, my unfortunate and tortured acquaintance. "He is using an effort," I involuntarily exclaimed, "to tear himself from the worthless ornament, and he will gain the victory."

His eye met mine at the very moment I thus spake, and with the cold damp falling from his forehead, and his features distorted by the misery which he was enduring, he held up to me the massive chain, and then ran with a convulsive shriek to his home, where he could bury in the darkest corner the burthen which he abhorred.

The interview, which I have narrated thus fully, with my newly-made acquaintance, produced upon my mind a very deep impression. How happy, I thought, shall I feel if I can be the means of bearing comfort to his worn and wasted mind. How pleased to become the medium of conveying consolation and rest to his aching and distracted bosom. I will endeavour to accomplish an object which I so much desire; and in the mean time I will take every possible care, and use every conceivable caution, that such poignant sorrow of heart as is the lot of the unfortunate man whom I now pity, may never be mine, through any similar neglect of the destitute and miserable. It is true that I, from a child, have shed tears over their agonies when I have read of them: but I have failed in the active exertion which alone can make sympathy valuable. I will from this hour give my ready attention to cases of want and woe, and will seek and search them out. I will go to the alleys

and lanes of London, to find out the desolation which reigns there, and I shall then avert so fearful a doom from myself as that which attaches to him from whom I have lately parted. Delighted shall I be, if in ministering to the poor I hereafter may happen to discover a balm for the wounds of that wealthy but most pitiable man!

The afternoon of the very day on which my attention had been thus forcibly attracted to the subject of Benevolence, afforded me an opportunity of commencing my mission of mercy. I had occasion to walk into the city, and, at the eastern end of Oxford Street, my notice was especially called to a person who stood before me. He was evidently half an idiot and half a madman. He had paused, and now gazed around,—one moment with a furious frown, the next with a vacant stare. He became fixed and stationary, as if he were the very centre to which all the surrounding misery and wretchedness tended. He bore the prominent traces of having once been well off, and seen happier and brighter hours.

He, in reality, beheld none of the busy throng around him. Unlike to the eyes in a good picture, which follow all persons whithersoever they may turn, his gaze rested on no man anywhere that he could possibly move. I made up my mind to trace this unfortunate specimen of blighted humanity, and to gain some insight into his character, so far as it had not become utterly a blank;—and, if possible, to learn somewhat of him, even from his own lips. He moved; and I walked behind the idiotic madman on his pilgrimage to his home,—for thither he bent his footsteps,—and watched him as he continually stopped short, one minute to shake his fist in boiling rage at some enemy which his own mind depicted; at another, to leer amorously at some pleasure, which he was mad enough to think that he might yet enjoy upon the earth, of which he had, in the opinion of his fellow-men, become a cumberer. I felt no alarm or misgivings of mind in attending this man, whom I saw to be insane, as I thought that as I meant but kindly towards him, I had nothing whatever to dread:—it is your “sensible men,”—“with their senses about them,” and “able to reason about matters,” who repay good intentions towards them with ingratitude, and often with evil and cruel actions. So I went fearlessly after him; and many a quarter of an hour was consumed in our brief journey, for it was a very short one, to his residence, in Bainbridge-street,—far down in which he halted abruptly before a house, which appeared to be entirely let out in lodgings to the poor sojourners in that portion of the metropolis. The mad creature looked earnestly at it for some time, and then gazed as attentively in the opposite direction: he rubbed his hands as if he had found some source of new delight; and next he shook his head as if he had broken his toy, and found nothing within it. The door of the house was ajar, and some children of tender age were sitting upon the steps which wound up to the various dwelling-places above. The man made a hideous face at them, to startle them, and then he shouted: “I’m not mad, you fools; I’m not mad. Why do you scream? you cry out as if one were mad!”—and then he laughed; but it was a laugh that had in it much more of heaviness than of

merriment. He pushed his way up to the garret where he resided, and as he trod upon the steps, which shook with his weight, he paused, to endeavour to write with his nail his name upon the white (once white) washed wall. He began the first letters correctly enough,—“Char”—and then he ended with a flourish in the air,—a figure signifying nothing, a picture of the imaginations of his troubled and inconstant mind. I pursued him until he arrived at the uppermost room of all, with a roof so low and sloping, that I required to bend my body to enter it. He turned sharply round on hearing a footstep behind him, and said: “Oh! it is you, is it?” with such a smile of joy that he looked quite pleasing and intelligent; but then, almost in a second, his look relapsed into one of utter imbecility. “You know me then, my friend,” said I, advancing towards him. “Know *you*!” he exclaimed, in a tone of fiery indignation; “Know *you*! I would not deign to know you if you were surrounded with princes, and nobles; for I am a very great man,—a very great man, indeed—one of the mightiest of potentates; and besides that,” continued he, lowering his voice, and bringing his mouth close to my ear, “I am not mad!” and then he looked very conceited at his own importance, and more so at his saneness, and walked vainly up and down the room, which creaked and shook with his weight.

I spoke to him of my fear that I had intruded upon his solitude. I asked him various questions, which I thought would draw from him some reply, but he only looked at me for a moment, and then turned away to nurse the roll of straw which served him for a pillow; to apply terms of endearment to it, and to laugh long and wildly at his own folly. At length I addressed one interrogatory, at which he grew grave and attentive. “Do you live quite alone here?” “Would any one live with me?—with mad Charles?—who frightens all the women and the children? Oh! no, no, no.” “Do you not find it very dull and miserable to reside quite by yourself?” The countenance of the man grew suddenly fixed, and his attention riveted: “I hate it, worse than death,” he shouted, “I wish I was dead and mouldered; and you must wish it too.” “I can assure you, my friend,” I answered him, “I am truly anxious for your happiness; and if you will tell me something of your present condition, I will do what I can to make it better and happier.”

He sat down and drew me towards him upon the low bedstead, which tottered and bent with the unusual weight, and fixing his eyes intently into mine, he began as follows:—

“I sometimes get out of this old rotten bed at night: for it is no very difficult thing to bring me out; an extra groan will have power to do it; it is barely a foot above the floor, and it is so short, as you see, that I am always forced to curl myself up in it, as if the poor man’s curse of coldness were continually upon me. Look at the beggarly old thing!” said he, striking it with his doubled fist, so forcibly that I thought it would have broken, “Is it not just such a couch as you would expect to see a dead body upon? It is beautifully adapted for a corpse; for one who cannot feel how or where he is placed. Ah! well, well! as I was telling you, I often got out—for I cannot

sleep at night; I can't sleep for the voice that always cries to me,—me, the lonely and uncared for, (but most when everything else is still) that I am—*not* wanted. Yes, if I sleep (do *you* ever sleep?) for ten minutes, it seems to me like a thousand years; because I am sleeping like a mummy, or rather like a clod. I am not resting to fit me for work on the morrow, or even for enjoyment; I am sleeping—without a cause! I get out, pace my room—up and down, up and down—but it is a wretched old room, as you see; so small, so damp, so cold. *So* little, that it is like being bandied about by the cruel world; one is sent back from side to side almost in a minute. *So* cold and damp, it is like the entrance to the tomb, but without its charm of mystery; for it is plain and easy enough here to see everything.”

Here he laughed and shouted, and ended his merriment with one of his deep sighs.



“ I huddle on my ragged clothes, and rush out into the low alleys and long silent streets. I struggle to find my way through the dark; for I choose the gloomiest courts and alleys for my journeyings. Oh! there is something pleasant in knowing that you cannot tell where you are going to; it is not like being shut up in a horrid little den of a room, in which you, and you

D

only, *know every nook and corner*,—know the old broken table, the tottering chair—the *one* tottering chair! Well! well! this is not what I wanted to tell you about. But now listen to me, and mark what I've got to say.

"On one of these wild, restless nights, I sprang from my bed—as I am accustomed to do—and threw my old rags over me, and ran down the crazy stairs, rushing out of the street door, and flitting along like a deer, when—oh! you don't know how fast I *can* run! you should see me, with those hated boys all after me, throwing mud at me, and calling me cruel names"—And at the remembrance of the oft-repeated wrong done to him, he fell into such a fit of alternate laughing and crying as was very painful to behold.

"Well, as I was telling you," he resumed, after a few moments, "when I had got out into the street, I saw the most curious thing I ever beheld. But you will laugh at me if I tell it you, and you will say that I was asleep and dreaming; and sometimes I almost think myself that I must have been so, because it seemed to me that I kept walking up hill, and up hill—up—and up—and up: and when one sleeps and dreams, one is always ascending! Aye, and it is quite right too; for when one is awake it is all descending—lower and lower—down, and down, and down—by insults and by injuries—by cares, ill usage, and misery! Well! after some time I arrived nearly at the top of a steep hill. The moon was shining out from behind a fleecy cloud—it shone brightly enough upon three figures, but most distinctly of all upon the highest of the three. How odd was their employment! How strange was the scene all around them! Listen to me while I tell you, and don't be afraid of me: for I am not mad now, although I may be when I'm in darkness, and alone. First of all, then, on the very topmost eminence a man was stooping, who looked very dull and very wretched; his back was bent, as if the iron weight of sorrow had weighed him down, as if he never could gaze upon the bright stars which adorned the heavens above him. On looking attentively, I recognised it was a game of leap-frog which was going on. The man I had most clearly discerned was acting the part of the boy who has to stoop for others to pass over. He appeared degraded and miserable. He who had just gone over seemed to me an aged person; but he was venerable and engaging in his aspect, and after having, apparently, passed without exertion, was resting upon a quiet grave, in the moonlight, down the side of the hill—a pleasant and a happy patriarch. The third man, who was behind the one first noticed, was ascending the hill, hardly seen in the dim distance; he looked of a most happy aspect, and most graceful form, full of agility and full of life. I thought that he surely would go over—a perfect model of merriment and gladness. I stood pondering what this strange sight could mean, when, suddenly, I heard a voice (or so it seemed to me) address me in distinct and solemn tones. It informed me that the three figures before me were Time Past, Time Present, and Time Future. Time Past was he who had gone over, and was far down the hill; Time Present was he who was even now stooping; and Time Future was the youth who was yet to come. Whilst I was meditating over this subject, and vainly striving to comprehend its meaning, the

centre figure, even Time Present, ran down the hill and sprang over the person before him; and no sooner had he done so, than—strange to say!—he appeared to be a most venerable and honourable personage, as he rested upon a quiet tomb, with the hallowed and fair moonlight seated upon his head. Then rushed forward the youth whom I had seen gaily climbing, and running up, and running down, he leaped over him who had last sprung, with an agility and grace almost inimitable! But alas! no sooner was he over, in all his youthful beauty and vivacity, than his gay look was changed and gone, and he was even the miserable and dejected centre figure which at an earlier period another had appeared. Whilst I wondered and pondered over these amazing alterations, they all began to leap, and so fast, so very, very fast, that I was utterly bewildered, and could make nothing whatever of the scene before me. They whirled like a swift wind; and at length I inquired of myself, whether they all were not really figures like unto him whom I had first noticed,—all miserable—all hopeless—all degraded—all withering—all worthless! Aye, and even whether I myself was not changing and passing away, and withering with them all!”

My companion, who had been thus communicative, and whose eyes had brightened as he progressed in his narration, now became suddenly still and sad. He appeared to have filled his mind with thoughts upon which he was compelled to ruminate in silence; for he turned away from me, hid his eyes with his hands, and rocked himself upon his chair. I often spoke to him, asking him whether he would not leave his desolate chamber, his miserable tenement, and come to rooms where he could have companionship, and the other comforts of life. He regarded me with an idiot stare for some minutes, and then commenced imitating with his fingers the movements of the figures which his fancy had presented to him: and when I assured him that happy days might yet remain for him, he made his fingers, which were thus active in obedience to his mad idea, spring over one another faster and faster,—so rapidly at last that I could not distinguish one from another. I drew towards him, and whispered in his ear that days of peace and prosperity might still be his; but he only repeated to himself the last words of his own tale: “All miserable—all hopeless—all degraded—all withering—all worthless!” Finding that my efforts were utterly vain to regain his attention, I withdrew from the apartment; and as I descended the broken and narrow staircase, I thanked heaven that, in the dark watches of the night, I should not have to think, when I remembered the sad catalogue of my errors and my sins, that I had by severity,—by unkindness, or by neglect, caused the mind of a thinking and immortal being to become maddened, disconsolate, and desolate! I left the house, entreating the landlord to behave with gentleness to the unhappy sufferer with whom I had passed the evening, and to remember that *he* had need of the best, and not the worst, of treatment, who had nothing within his own mind, or infinitely worse than nothing!

The interview which I have just narrated, strengthened me more than ever in my resolution of mingling with my poorest and most lonely brethren, in

order that I might see if I could not, in some little measure, ameliorate their sad condition. "I will go," said I to myself, in deep meditation, "I will go to the scenes where it is most probable I shall come in contact with the most needy and despised. There are streets in this overgrown metropolis which peculiarly abound with the pallid pauper; and in every thoroughfare in London there are resting-places (if I may call them so, for poverty hath but slight repose) for the sickly and the starved. I may easily meet with the wretched if I choose to look around me; and I will willingly do so. I have seen this evening to what a ruined condition neglect and destitution can reduce my fellow-men, my brothers, united to me by the close relationship of country, and, as my fellow-Christians, joined to me by the dearest bond that can connect immortal souls. And should it not be regarded by me as a real blessing, that I *can* benefit the lowly? How trifling would be my fame (should I ever rise to be distinguished in the world), how low my highest point of eminence, if I could not increase my seeming elevation, by lifting up the humble and the persecuted! I might, indeed, stand upon a lofty mountain, but wanting *the flag which my hand could raise*, the advantage of my position—gained with much trouble, and whole years of toil—would be the mockery of grandeur. If Providence should shower on me the gifts of wealth and influence, into how much worse than vanity should I convert the intended benefits, if I did not again dispense a portion of the copious stream to gladden and fertilize around me! I should be but as a barren plain, on which the rain of heaven descends, and not as a glorious fountain, which distributes its bounty as freely as it receives it from above.

"Providence, in its abundant goodness, hath given me relations who love me with a tender and an enduring love; but how short, how infinitely short, would the joys of love itself fall below that which I now feel it to be, if I could be but a mere recipient, and not a bestower of such a celestial good. I should then be but on a level with the dog and the horse, which are objects of the regard of many, and not, as I am called to be, a participator in a divine feeling. Yes! it is my grand privilege, to be permitted to resemble, in such a degree as my human nature makes practicable, the Author and the Giver of all love!"

I trust that my reader will not here desert me, and exclaim that if I am intending to conduct him to narrow courts, to lead him into receptacles of wretchedness and uncleanness, he will frustrate my desire, and withdraw himself to scenes more elegant in themselves and more gratifying to him who mingles in them. Such is my purpose; but as the "dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear full many a gem of purest ray serene," so, doubt not, that the gloomy hollows of alleys and lanes contain within them some pure and righteous feelings, possessed by even the most depraved of their inhabitants; and that some spirits, who will hereafter dwell with angels, now tabernacle in sinks of vice, from which the moral man of the present day turns away with a hurrying step and an upturned eye.

Go with me and gaze upon the unpleasing sights which may be presented;

but do not afterwards forget them. When formerly I visited such places, I did meditate over them afterwards, and I told others that they also should feel for the pitiable objects whom I had seen. In describing to my friends what was to be beheld, I always represented the poor people remaining cold and sad; stationary as when I looked upon them. I ought to have remembered that in a similar manner, when the minds of the distressed were madly whirling with rage at their hard and unnoticed condition, or were subdued and stricken by the bedside of starving relatives, my image passed before their mental sight, exactly the same as when I traversed their narrow thoroughfares,—apparently uncaring, unthinking, unpitying! Whilst I was feeling deeply, but inactively, and thus uselessly for their woes, they were perhaps cursing me for my utter heedlessness and cold-heartedness!

Resolved, then, upon seeking out the poor, and not waiting tamely till they came and found me in my quiet dwelling-place, I set out on the evening succeeding to that upon which my interview with the madman took place, determined to hurry to some place of wretchedness where the miserable would be thronging in crowds. I readily perceived that no locality could be better adapted for my purpose than Broad Street, St. Giles's, near to which I had on the day previous been struck by the unhappy appearance of the ragged maniac. To this point accordingly I directed my footsteps; and when the good clock of the church of St. Giles struck the hour of six, I had arrived at my place of destination. I walked up and down, contemplating the many objects of wretchedness and poverty that were there congregated.

I soon noticed a woman, apparently pleased with a treasure which she had gained, for although care had made deep furrows in her cheek, and sorrow had written upon her countenance in its unalterable characters, she faintly smiled. She was bearing hurriedly away from public view a little quantity of weak broth, which she had succeeded in purchasing, or which, perhaps, some charitable lady had, in abundant mercy, bestowed upon her. A fragile jug conveyed the watery liquid, yet it was admirably adapted for its purposes, for it was not required, by its poor possessor, to carry much weight at any time. Some sister of charity, whose income was its "tens of thousands," had, it may be, permitted her cook to boil down bones into soup for the starving; which bones would have graced the dustman's basket, had it not been feared that by their remaining too long a time, ere the dustman with his burthen of rubbish paid his accustomed visit, they might encourage the rat to come in and colonize. More merciful than Dives! thou givest to the fainting Lazarus such bones as the dogs will not pursue. After the poor woman with her jug of broth had proceeded a short distance, and had arrived in High Street, she stopped to speak with a group of those sad-looking creatures who there congregate to compare their miseries, and groan over the famishing little ones they have left in their garret homes. I came near to them; and as I did so, I heard the others asking her whom I had first noticed, where she had procured the soup?—for so they designated it, she replied that a kind lady in Bloomsbury-place had given it to her: the friends ejaculated seemingly in

concert together: "what a pity it is you did not get it before." At that moment, a proud policeman with a very pompous and awe-striking air, approached the little coterie, "Come! move on! move on!" said A, B, or C, and he began very busily "dispersing the mob." For be it observed, that if but two of the destitute come together to say a few words of comfort to one another, they instantly become, in the eyes of the law, "a crowd," although in sober truth, the wealthy and fashionable may render the Quadrant impassible, and may effectually block up the thoroughfare of Piccadilly, and yet remain but, "a select few." The poor women drew their thin black shawls more closely around them, and walked on, readily yielding to the strong arm of justice. I could not refrain from sighing at the vast difference which is allowed, which is sanctioned,—shall I say which is ordered?—to be made in the method of treating the great and the humble.

I followed the emaciated female whom I had particularly noticed, until I overtook her. It was no difficult matter to accomplish this; for she walked but feebly, and appeared to be completely worn and jaded. "You have something nice, I hope, there"—I said, addressing her, "it will do you good, for you look very thin and ill." The poor woman started with surprise at hearing any person speak compassionately to her, and evidence any interest in her welfare.

"Heaven bless you, sir, for your kindness," said the hapless creature, and the big tears filled her eyes."

"Is it for your supper?" I enquired, pointing towards the broth.

"It's for my old man, sir," she answered, "it's not for me; a crust of bread will do well enough for me."

"Does your husband require then to fare better than you do?"

"Oh! yes, sir, for he's ill abed, he can't move hand or foot scarce; and I'm able to get about and look after myself."

"Has your husband been long ill?"

"A month come Thursday, sir, and I'm afeard he won't get round again."

"What is the matter with him?"

"He's ill altogether, sir, but it's fretting that's done it, I'm sure that it is."

"What has been troubling him so much, then, is it his poverty, and the hardships you and he have to endure?"

"Oh! it's not the scanty fare, sir, and it's not the hard boards to sleep upon; we all of us always knew what it was to have scanty food, and a hard bed, and yet we were contented and happy. It's not that, that would make the old man fret."

"You said fret now, *all* of us; are there more than yourself and your husband then at home?"

"There *were* more, sir," said the poor woman, and she raised the corner of her tattered and faded shawl to her pallid face, to hide the gushing tears.

"You seem as miserable as your partner, and you also are letting your grief prey upon your health."

"Sir," said the poor woman, emphatically, "I have only one pleasure now,

and that is, to sit still and listen to the great bell of that church close by, when it is tolling for a burying, and to think that it will not be long before it tolls for me. That bell is almost the only thing that speaks kindly to me in the world, and that says what I would wish it to say."

"I should like to go to your room and see whether I cannot mend matters a little."

"Heaven shower down its blessings upon you, sir, here and hereafter."

"Will it pain you, my good friend, to tell me something of your sad history on our way?"

"Oh! it will do me pounds' worth of good," said the afflicted one, "to have some gentleman to open my heart to. It's the first time for many and many a long day, sir, that any human soul has been ready to listen to my sorrows. I have gone through the long streets of London, creeping along with my petition tight in my hand, wrapped up in a piece of newspaper to keep it clean for the gentry. I have knocked softly—one knock at the great door—(I did not dare to ring, for fear it should make the servant angry when he came, if he had thought that it was some one he wished to see, and found it a beggar!)—and the man has opened the door, and looked at me; and it was enough—he knew all my tale, and he slammed the door in my face, and went off with a muttered curse, for my disturbing him from his laugh down stairs; or if sometimes he has deigned to take the paper from me, it has soon been given back to me with (and I knew it well enough, sir, to my sorrow), 'O! it's a petition.' My tale, sir, for which you asked me, is one that is very common. I dare say, sir, there are hundreds like me; but I feel for them whoever they are. I often think, sir, it's very wicked and wrong of me to take on so much, but I can't help it—for my tears will come, though I try to hide them, and my sighs will force themselves upon me, though I strive to check them. When I am sitting by the bed-side of my old man, through the long winter night, and there's no coal in the grate, and but a thin garment over me, I take out the tract which a good lady was kind enough to call one morning and leave with me, and I read of the blessed Saint, who, it is sure and certain, is at rest and happy now, because when she felt herself ill and sad, she used always to sing a hymn. And I think then that I must be very bad!—for when I call to mind old times, sir, and look at my poor husband on the bed—and look at the little mattress in the corner of the room quite empty, I can't sing, sir;—I try very hard to sing—but the words won't come, for all my trying. But I am forgetting my tale, sir;—it is a simple, but a sad one. There was my husband and myself, and one little child. She was a very little thing, sir, only seven years old, but she was everything to her father and to me. Other people thought nothing of her, but when I was at my wash-tub, and the good man at his work, breaking the stones, we used to stop every now and then, and smile when we thought of seeing Jane in the evening when labour was over. I could bear to hear the gentry speak rough to me. I could bear to see fine lords and ladies toss their heads when they looked at me; but I could not bear to hear little Jane spoke sharp to, it used to cut me

like a razor. I used to cry sometimes to hear my darling spoken rough to by some rich child, and to see how abashed poor Jane would look at the sight of the other, because it was very well off. I had read, sir, in the Bible, that children's angels behold great and blessed sights in heaven ;—and I have wondered sometimes that my sweet infant, who was so very dear and precious to the glorious spirits above, should seem so contemptible in the eyes of another of the most helpless of the good God's creatures! Well, sir, some two years ago, my husband lost his place of breaking the stones; there were so many poor creatures wanting to do it, that the gentlemen of the parish said my husband mustn't have all ' the good-luck' (so they called it) to himself,—and I got less and less work to do, till we hadn't got the means to buy firewood or food, and we were almost starving and worn out. Poor little Jane began to droop, sir, from that time; she ought to have been well fed, sir, and kept up; but it was as much as we could do to give her a crust of bread, and a drink of water. She kept getting thinner and thinner, paler and paler, till you would not have known her for the dancing happy creature she used to be. She used to laugh *once* at her old battered doll, but now she saw nothing to smile at in it; it was small and worn, and wretched looking, but she didn't see any thing unlike to a child in it *now*, poor Jane! She was *so* fond of that doll, sir, when she saw it so battered and wretched, she used to call it *her own child*, and kiss it. My dear girl had had little teaching, sir; she just knew her letters and that was all: she had been taught her alphabet by a neighbour, who used to notice her, and she had been taught a little of her needle; and now she tried, when her illness came upon her, to work something to hang up over our chimney-piece, but she hadn't the strength even to do that. I soon saw, sir, how it would be,—that death was working his sampler with my poor child's name and age following her first learned alphabet; and so it was! Every hour she grew weaker and paler; and though I knew she would soon leave me altogether, I was obliged to leave her to go to the wash-tub to earn even the few pence that was needed to buy her the crust of bread that her dear teeth had hardly the strength to bite. I went to my work, sir, but I had not spirit to do it. I could not get through what I used to do, although I never paused *now* to smile in the midst of my labour. I was toiling, sir, for nothing, for she was passing away from me, for whom I was happy to wear out my life. Oh! sir, if any one could have seen my husband then, they must have felt for him, if their heart was as hard as a stone. He was once the gayest man, so full of mirth and of fun; always ready to laugh at every thing, and singing early and late,—and when the dear child fell sick, through starvation and cold, he used to sit all the day through with his head resting upon his hand, and his eyes fixed upon Jane, and the big tears dropping upon his poor knee. I went out to beg for her, sir,—to pray for some help from the great houses all about London, but as I told you before, sir, the petition I carried was given back to me unopened. And all the while, sir, my only child was dying! At last I went to one house, and the footman was merciful, and he took in my petition,—and four or five days after, sir, when things were almost

at the end, and her father was sitting by the bed-side, expecting every moment would be her last (for starvation had *done* its work); and while he was in an agony, counting her breathings, a message came to him that there was something for her—for *the child* you know, sir,—at the great house to which I had been, if her father would take the trouble to fetch it—if *her father would take the trouble*.

“Food, when it came, sir, came too late, and little did it come at all. My child sunk fast, every day getting weaker and fainter, although she was so good and so amiable; yet when the bones began to come through the skin, the poor girl could not help lying and groaning. I used to wonder the dear thing should scream and groan so loud, when the policeman walks always up and down our court to see that all is quiet. I knew she must be in dreadful pain when she did so, for she had become so cowed by everybody out-a-doors that she scarce dared to speak or to laugh, for fear some one should be angry. Yes, sir! when she was well, and out a walking with me, if she began to jump about and play, as happy children always do, some cruel man was ready to frown at her, and to tell her to take care how she was going on. If she had been a rich child, sir, it would not have been like that, as I dare say you know right enough.



“My own lamb was now on the point to die; and my good man and me were obliged to sit by and see her die. The parish doctor, when he was forced to come and see her, used to bustle in and bustle out again. He would say: ‘It’s no use fretting about it (he was not a man to fret about such things), the child can’t live; and that’s enough. There’s a lady waiting

E

to see me, and I can't stop. You had better give her nourishing food, and it's no use sending to me about her, for I can do nothing for her.' And all the time he was talking, he was taking snuff, and brushing his coat over with his hand, and thinking no more of the sick child, who was laid upon the bed, than if she had never had a father to weep for her, nor a mother who had watched over her from the hour she was born. His chaise was standing at the end of the court, and he was always afraid that his horse would catch cold, and he said he should be sadly grieved if anything should happen to the animal which he drove.

"My husband thought he would go to the gin-shop at the corner, and beg a drop of some spirit to wet the lips of the darling with, as she seemed so fearfully low and faint; and while he was there he overheard a man in the small room which is always at the back of such places, for people to take their ease and drink at their leisure, (a man who was one of those who hang on to the workhouse, and who was running up a score on the ground of the shillings he was to exact from the most wretched;) telling some others who were with him, that he hoped he should have the job of carrying the body of our dead child, when she was dead, from our hovel to the workhouse, to be buried from there, that he might have the shilling such men claim from those who are *so* poor as to be obliged thus to part with their dead. Yes! my husband had to hear that, and he had to hear the song which followed what the fellow said in his half-drunken state. This was a pleasant thing for a parent's ears, sir, wasn't it? You may be sure my good man lost no time in leaving the house, and getting back to the little one, whom all things, even this man's brutality, seemed to make more dear to him.

"The child died, sir! with the chilly, drifting rain coming in against her thin face. The roof of the house had long been very bad, and now it had got out of order altogether. She died, sir, without a soul on earth to care for her, except her father and myself; but we cared for her enough for all the world together. Her father fell ill as soon as ever she died, and I think he will never get well any more. He lived only for her, sir; and he will soon follow her to live with her for ever. When the child was dying she felt the cold very much, and all she asked for was fire to keep her warm, or fire even *to look at*, that she might *seem* warmer. Her father burnt our old stool, leg by leg (for it was then our one piece of furniture), to make a fire, and afterwards, when every other thing was gone, the *last thing* that he touched for the purpose, sir, was the battered, torn doll of which I before spoke to you; and when the little one gave up her breath, that doll was in the grate, serving as the only fuel!"

By the time my informant had completed her sad tale—one that has too many, and too afflicting, a counterpart—we had reached her poverty-stricken abode. It was in one of the most wretched courts in London, and her own room was the highest in the house—an almost empty, and entirely cheerless, dwelling-place. We groped our way up the dark staircase, till we arrived at her door; on entering, I discovered a man, looking very pale and ill, stretched

upon the floor. There was no article of furniture, excepting a mattress—a small mattress—which lay in the corner of the room, and which by its neat and clean appearance, seemed to have had so much zealous attention bestowed upon it that I easily surmised who had once reposed there,—and there, in happier hours, sung herself to sleep with the sweet notes of childhood's melody. The man raised his head from his hard couch, upon my coming in, and looked towards his wife to explain to him who I was, and what was the reason of my accompanying her.

"I am come," said I, addressing myself to him, "in order that I may see if I can make you more comfortable than you now are." His eye was fixed upon the vacant mattress, and he sighed. "Your room looks dreary," I continued; "we must try and get something to fill it."

"She is gone, sir," replied the sufferer; "it must be always empty."

"I hope to see you about yet, in the streets of London."

"It is too late, sir, to go for the medicine or the food; she cannot have it now, if I bring it."

I endeavoured to divert his mind in some degree from the one engrossing subject, but in vain.

"My pleasure is gone, sir! I am greatly obliged to you for coming, and if you can make my poor woman more easy I shall be truly grateful; but for me it is no use your speaking, for I should never hear *that voice* again if people were to talk for ever to me. It's no good your giving me food and wine, for that cold mouth and that death-pale lip cannot take a part of it, or sip at it. If you could give me that old doll again, sir, it would be something, but that doll is burnt, and I am miserable."

I made such arrangements as my means permitted, and I could hope would be in any way beneficial to this poor couple. And I thought that I would have given the whole world—if that world had been mine—to have placed the girl's little hands once more in those of her heart-broken parents. On the day after that on which this most sad visit took place, I sat in my chamber for a long time musing over the bitter sorrows and the untold oppressions of the poor, until I got so confused, that my head seemed to whirl about, even as if I myself were being pulled on all sides by starving and perishing children crying out for food;—and all things seemed to me a blank, an utter and a hopeless blank, even such as the statesman's reply holds out to the earnest application of the uninfluential and the needy. "I will go out," said I, to myself, springing from my chair; "I will go and walk abroad, and shake off this dull and onerous feeling." Accordingly, I speedily put my determination into execution, and sallied forth, to drive away the gloom that rested upon me. As I opened the street-door, the glad, the joyous, the life-giving wind met me with its free and generous breeze—as if it bade me God-speed in the holy and acceptable work of enjoying nature's pure and beautiful pleasures. It was one of those winds which a person rushes against with vigorous enjoyment, as if opposing it, with that laughing glee with which we seem to act contrary to those whom we love, only because we love them

so dearly, and are so delighted to have them with us, and to let them eventually have the complete victory over us. It was one of those winds which would make the sweet banner of calm peace float gallantly over all the earth, if all nations and countries would be content to look up to it at its elevated and celestial height. I bounded, actually bounded, along the street, and as I turned my gaze upwards, it met that of the glorious sun, looking down upon me as if he had found a friend—and so in truth he had, for he discovered one whom he benefited and blessed. Verily, that sun had a tongue, an eloquent tongue, and a language of surpassing oratory; or rather, I should say, he had millions of voices; for he spoke in all things. Every bird, insect, plant and tree, caroled out to heaven the hymn of praise and love, which that genial sun had inspired. Under such a sun some venerable old man who has numbered his three-score years and ten, uncovers his grey and flowing locks, and as he looks up to the bright luminary above him, lifts up his heart in thankfulness to their common Author; for he recollects years long past and gone, years of honest toil and hardy industry, during which such suns, while they blanched his once dark and glossy hair, lighted him on to see his sportive grandchildren playing around his knees; and he thinks of the approaching period when he shall slumber in the grass-covered grave, and when his tender relatives will love to muse over the friend of their long summer days, and splendid winter mornings.

I noticed with delight, a bright and gorgeous cloud above me, it was one so luminous and so joy-inspiring, that I might have fancied it placed there, like the rainbow of old, to show mankind that the verdant and gladsome earth would never again be destroyed by rain, issuing from such clouds as that above me. I could have dreamed that the blessed souls of innocent and happy children, delivered from the earth, ere they had tasted of its sorrows and its cares, might be conveyed along in such a sweet sailing-vessel as that cloud; it would perhaps be too much for those infants to enter at once into celestial beauties, to mix with prophets, saints, and martyrs; and they might therefore first traverse the heavens, in such a manner; to become acquainted with the excellencies of the prospects which their eyes are permitted to behold;—a prelude to the higher and nobler bliss in which they are subsequently to participate. Or my imagination could have drawn that cloud filled with happy and purified souls: who, still having upon this earth friends, whom they love with an ardent and unperishing affection, would not willingly be far removed from their former dear associates, even though it were in the tabernacle of the skies; but would fain dwell in the cloud, gladdening with its beauty the up-turned glances of their treasured friends.

I listened to the hum of many voices, a blessed sound, of the old and young, the rich and the poor, the peer and the peasant, blending together, in sweet unison, evidently showing that all ages and all ranks were intended by providence to be happy, as the joint expression of their feelings and their wishes makes the most perfect and most pleasing of all melodies.

Amongst such an assemblage, if one were to give them a thrilling word of

grief to utter, it would be so bandied about, so clipped by the tiny infant, and so shouted by the laughing school-boy, that it would ultimately return a word of glee and merriment. The sound of mingled voices has very frequently been compared to the noise of the sea, "the mighty deep;" and in very deed it is like unto it. I love to lie and listen to it, in a half-waking, half-sleeping state, dreaming away my time; but when I do so, I think of it as a sea, carrying prosperously forward the bark of some happy company, and never as a wintry ocean bearing a grieving crew far away from their treasured home. I inhaled that delightful perfume which, when a fine open wind is blowing, meets the passenger at every corner; which seems at each and every turning, to be like a friend of your heart, waiting there expressly for your coming; or to show that a man has but to depart a little from the dull straight common-place high-road of life, to be met and embraced by this messenger of heaven, this angel with the fragrant dew upon his wings.

O glorious breeze! thou seemest as if thou hadst hastened to meet and to gladden me!—as if thou hadst come bounding along at thine utmost speed, hardly pausing even at the several beds of sweet flowers, save to bear away *for me* their delightful perfume! Truly thou art like tender, loving woman; who oftentimes appears to know joy herself, solely for the purpose of communicating it to sad and dejected man. Oh! this gay wind seems the happiest of all created things,—if that can be called "a thing," which is altogether so unearthly and celestial;—and yet it is of earth, for while the brightest glories descend from heaven—like falling stars; the softest strains of music glide downwards on the ear, like the farewell notes of the hovering bird;—the gladsome breeze seems ever rising upwards from the fair plains, and rejoicing in its heaven-directed course.

In truth, the day, of which I am now speaking, was such a one as is seldom seen; and, being once beheld, is long remembered. It was such a day as fills all living things naturally with peace—aye, and with bounding glee!

But whilst the air was bidding me "go forth" into a world of enjoyment and sunshine, there was a hapless man—an aged man—who sat upon the step of a street door, unnoticed by the bustling world. Huddled together, he rested as if he would remain stationary and solitary, with the countless charms of nature beyond him, and the throng of pleased fellow-creatures encircling him. He might well have turned into stone there upon that cold seat, remaining a fixed thing, like those of whom we read in classic mythology,—a scraper, it might be, for the feet of the rich and the pompous who were about to enter the splendid hall within.

That rushing wind of which I have spoken, whose vigorous blasts seemed so enlivening and so congenial to my heart, was altogether around that hapless wretch, and appeared to him as rough as if misery, with its blood-hounds, had hunted him down, and fenced him in; as if the dogs of prey were upon him, resolutely and fiercely, aye, and victoriously, in—in—at the very death! We are as "the grass of the field;" "the wind passeth over us, and we are gone;" yet do this lone one's fellow-men take no warning from, and feel no

yearning towards, one who, sharing with them a nature most frail and perishable, has no comforts to defend him from its dangers, and no arts to teach him to forget its mortality! He beholds no beauty in the glorious sun—he finds no blessing in its ray—no benefit in its genial warmth; half-starved, and well-nigh degraded from the proud position of man, he would rather turn away into the darkest courts, because there the offals which others have cast away may lie unnoticed in the path, and he may seize them with eager and trembling hand, and devour them with ravenous and nervous jaw! He has the brand of utter and hopeless poverty upon him. He is a Joseph, to whom the bright sun has made his brethren—his cruel, his hard-hearted brethren—known; and he can scarcely tell, in agony of mind, how to refrain himself: he would wish to steal away into the hidden chamber of some lonely alley, and—weep there. The sun will not *smile* again upon him, although it smiles upon all creation besides; unless, perchance, when he shall have become an inmate of the gloomy workhouse—a recipient of scanty “indoor relief,” he may then, peradventure, upon some burning and glaring July morning, look out, attired in his worsted dress—which singles him out from happier and freer mortals—upon his only prospect, the crowded church-yard; and he may behold the sun drying up the stunted grass upon the grave of his fellow-wretch, his former companion in the living tomb which the gentle feelings of commissioners have erected, in their “tender mercies.” He may witness from the grated window the sun rendering conspicuous to all men the sheep which turn away with disgust from the neglected pasturage which marks the last—the only—resting place of the parish-pauper. And then, perhaps, he may gaze upon the resplendent light, and look, longingly, for the season when the blaze of toilsome day shall have ended in dark and peaceful night, without work, and without a workhouse!

I was quite astonished to behold the old man, after a short period, rise from his chilly resting-place, and very slowly, and with much difficulty, move on upon his way. He tottered as he went, and paused at every other step, as if his frail limbs were insufficient to bear the weight of his aged body,—although that body was light enough. His jaws kept working, as if he were eating, but no food had he to satisfy his craving hunger. I drew near to him, and, when but a few paces behind, addressed him in accents of kindness. He turned not round to mark who was in the rear; he thought within himself that no friend was anxious to overtake him; that if a voice of friendship spake, it spake not to him. People, when they would direct their conversation to him, looked him in the face hardly and sternly, and exclaimed with rigour, “Now, you sir!” Onwards did he go; and sad and bitter thoughts of days long passed, and loved ones perished from the earth, went with him. I hesitated to stop him abruptly, lest I should alarm him; but I lagged behind, and kept him in my view. He presently leaned against a post at the corner of the street, and, as his eye caught something that was ludicrous, he smiled—actually smiled; but a moment afterwards his look changed into one of utter astonishment at himself, that he could be moved to pleasure by any

earthly thing. I approached him, and held out to him a coin of very small amount. He shook his head mournfully. "Here," said I, and placed the money close to his hand.

"I have nothing to sell, sir," said he; and he began to move away.

"I don't want to buy," replied I.

"Nor *I* don't want to buy," muttered the old man, "if they'd only let me keep what I've got."

"Take it, my friend—it is a gift—a very small one." His palsied hand clutched eagerly at it, and he was about to bear it away, displayed to public view, as if he were carrying the signal of some mighty victory which he had accomplished.

"You had better be more careful; some one will seize it."

"Seize it," he emphatically exclaimed, "seize it!—will they seize *this* as well then?"

The poor creature shook from head to foot at the bare idea of his being robbed of this little treasure, and buried it in the very lowest recess of his tattered pocket.

"The world uses you roughly, my friend," were my next words,—“very roughly, I am afraid?”

"Eh!" said my companion, "what is it?"

"You are in distress—are you not?"

"Come and see—come and see."

I readily accepted the invitation, and walked by his side. He turned his steps in the direction which I presumed to lead to his humble home; and I sauntered near him. He spoke not another word; but occasionally he glanced up sharply, to be sure that I had not deserted him. Our point of destination, at which, after a long time, we arrived, was Crown-court, Gray's-Inn-lane; and when we faced the court, his long and bony hand pointed up to it, as if to mark out to me that that was the place which contained his desolated abode. To look down that wretched passage gives the spectator a feeling of equal disgust and commiseration. The houses are so miserable that the object of the builder appears to have been to crowd as many hapless families as possible into the least imaginable space. And such, indeed, is the usual and approved method of erecting tenements in the alleys and by-ways of London. What shall I denominate the style of their architecture?—Alas! is it not purely English? I soon perceived, by the intense agitation of the old man,—who, up to that period, had been almost as cold and callous as a stone,—which was the home at which he sojourned. A stern iron-faced person was seizing the furniture of my broken-hearted companion. There was an exulting look upon the landlord's face, as he stood near beholding the scene, as if he had secured the treasures of Egypt, or the wealth of Cræsus; while the party whom he had employed for "the job," bore off a table that had not legs whereon to stand, and a bedstead that might have been fit for firewood, excepting that it was too damp. He might well have realized the idea of the dog in the fable of old, which had intended to carry off some sub-

stance, and bore away only a shadow. The worn man sat himself down upon the ground, and gazed upon each separate article as it came forth from the tenement.

"I bought that old basin-stand," said he, pensively, "the year that I was married;—my mistress chose it for me. I am glad that she's not here to see it go away again, or it would break her old heart."

"Where is your wife?" I inquired.

"She's at a neighbour's round the corner, sir," said he. "I asked her to keep out of the way, for it's no use to grieve her, you know. She has enough to cry about for her own pains and aches, without being brought here to see such a sight as this."

"Is your wife ill?" I asked my companion.

"She's eat up with the rheumatics. She can't walk without a crutch;—and they'd have taken the crutch away, if she'd been at home, and they could have got it from her. Poor creature! it's little she can get about, and it would have been sad if they'd stopped her from hobbling about at all."

"I wish I had the means to save you a few of your things, but I have not. I will, however, see some kind friends to-night, who are always ready to assist the poor, and see what they can do for you."

The old man's eyes filled with tears—tears which he would fain have hidden from the partner of his sorrows, had she been present, lest they should have increased her woe.

"Do not take the miserable man's bedstead," I said to the landlord; "it is every thing to him to have something upon which he can repose his aching limbs at night."

The man to whom I spoke looked at me for a few moments, and then whistled through his teeth.

"I will return and pay you the amount of the bedstead, if you will spare it. I have not with me sufficient money to settle for it at once."

He winked his eye in a knowing manner, and tapped his pocket three times, as much as to say, there is such an argument in the world as a *quid pro quo*; and that to such reasoning only would he consent to listen. I turned to the old man to express my regret;—"Let it go, sir," answered he. "The neighbour will give half her bed to my wife; and I will sit down upon the ground all night, like Job, and think of days that are gone."

"Nay," said I, "I will hasten home, and bring money enough to free the bedstead for you."

"I wish you may find it waiting here when you come back again—that's all," growled out the ruthless landlord.

Upon my naming to him, however, the sum which I was ready to pay for the ancient lumber, he appeared to relax very greatly in his severity, and nodded his head in a friendly manner, as he uttered the words, "Oh, that's a different thing altogether. I don't want to be harsh to the old fellow, if I can get my rights from him."

Giving him my assurance that I would before long return with the sum

which I had named to him, and which I am assured considerably exceeded the just value which any person could have put upon the aged article.

I hastened home to give the requisite money for its liberation. Upon my revisiting the spot, within an hour, great was my surprise to find that the goods, (if they deserved the appellation), had been removed from the court;—that the landlord and his deputy had also vanished; and that even the hapless octogenarian had left his cold seat upon the bare ground, and gone, I knew not whither. It is a difficult matter in wretched courts such as those which branch out from Gray's Inn Lane, to discern the difference of house from house;—for all are dirty—all are mean—all are narrow—all are disgusting to the human sight. At length I found, by a certain broken pane of glass, the tenement from which the chattels, on my previous visit, were being carried away. I knocked with my fist against the door, and a savage looking person opened it, who merely assured me he knew nothing about what I wanted, and slammed the door roughly upon me.

Visions of the poor old man haunted me through the night following, and I determined to start upon a benevolent pilgrimage, and not to rest till I had found the object of my search. For many days did I pursue my purpose, but without attaining my object. Of course it was no difficult matter to meet with those who had seen a person who looked unhappy—for in London, those of such an expression swarm like bees, although there are no sweets for them to gather. It was sufficiently easy to hear of the aged and the destitute; for the great metropolis is thronged and crowded with them. But when I had traced to their hiding place, those about whom information had been given to me—disappointment attended me in every journey. At length success crowned my efforts. One morning, just as I was quitting home, a surly looking man met me at the door, and enquired if he could speak with me. As the interrogator was anything but prepossessing in his external appearance (for he seemed to be the connecting link between a cab-driver and a dog-stealer), I felt some little diffidence in expressing my readiness to hold a conversation with him; but upon my learning that he had come from "the gentleman" who had taken "the old fellow's" "moveables," I willingly invited him into my study.

"The gentleman ordered me to call here about the old chap who went off without paying up," were the commencing words of my new visitor's elegant discourse. "I have been trying," said I, "to find out your mast—your—employer, (I corrected myself, for I did not like to offend his notions of freedom and equality,) but without success. I was astonished when I returned, after a short absence, to Crown-court, to find both the gentleman and the poor man gone, as well as the bedstead for which I was to have paid." "He thought you'd cut off altogether," said the landlord's deputy, "when you came to reckon up the cash." "He was rather too hasty in his judgment," I answered, "but I have the money in my drawer,

and am quite ready to pay it, as soon as the old man has his bedstead, if you know where the poor creature is to be found." "I know the old fellow's house well enough, if that's all; but my governor says you must pay up for the keep of the bedstead." "Well! (although it is an unhandsome charge), I would not mind this, in order to let the wretched man have *his own* furniture once more, if I knew where to find him." "I likes to do the thing that's agreeable always; so if you'll stand a glass of something, I'll take you down myself to the old chap." I so much desired to find the broken-hearted sufferer once more, that I agreed to the unreasonable demands made upon me, and consented to accompany my new acquaintance, although I felt much anxiety as to the safety of my silk handkerchief, and my pocket-book, whilst sharing his pleasant company. We left the house together, and wended our way, in the first instance to the landlord's, and, subsequently, to the tenement of the octogenarian. The first mentioned house was situated in Chichester-place, Gray's-Inn-Road; it was the residence of a comfortable tradesman—everything seemed to be going prosperously with the owner. His fat and rosy children were sporting about in the shop, staring eagerly at each customer that entered, and appearing intensely interested in the various articles of consumption which were purchased. The man bowed civilly to me as I came in, and winked his eye and smiled with the gentle being who had led me thither. "You come about that there bedstead, I presume," said he. "I do Mr. —," I answered. "That's been a great expense to me, that bedstead has," continued he, "I'm out of pocket by it considerable." "You do not intend to be so much longer," thought I to myself. "That it has, Sir," he resumed, "the cost I've laid out upon it, to have it kept dry and nice, for fear the old man come to get any harm by it afterwards; nobody knows." "Nobody!" said I, aside. "I hope, Sir, you won't object, therefore, to the very reasonable demand of two shillings a day, for looking after it; its a mere nothing to you," and he smiled—if any expression full of craftiness can be termed *a smile*. "Its a very great deal to me, Mr. —" I interposed, cutting short his harangue—"but I am willing to make you some recompense, if you have taken so much care of the furniture." I should have told my reader that, whilst the owner of the shop and I were talking together, I had sauntered from the place of business in front, to the comfortable little "back shop," which was, in truth, no shop at all, but a snug sitting-room, with a soft sofa, and well stuffed chairs; and with numerous china ornaments, and highly coloured paintings, adorning it. I should also have mentioned, that the residences in Chichester-place have small slips of garden behind them—narrow ruralities, producing three sunflowers, and a handful of Michaelmas daisies:—"little paradises," as, no doubt, Mr. —, emphatically denominated them to his occasional companions in those omnibuses which ply betwixt King's Cross and Kennington Gate. While conversing with him, my eye inadvertently wan

dered to this miniature Eden, and I noticed a shed at the further end of it, which consisted of some common planks nailed together, and under which something forcibly arrested my regard. I was inspecting it in a very scrutinizing manner, when my host perceived it with his lynx eye. "Will you walk into the front shop?" said he, anxiously, "it is a more lively situation than this confined room." I complied with his suggestion, and the landlord gave orders to "the boy" to bring the bedstead from up stairs; but, as far as my hearing enabled me to judge, his feet tended more towards the shed than the dormitories. Having induced the landlord to come to terms, I started upon my second excursion with my unpleasant guide, who now acted as my porter also.

We had but a short distance to go; our destination was Chad's-place—a row of miserable houses, situated close by the well which is named after St. Chad, and which, at one time, was much frequented by persons of weakly constitutions.

I first entered the hovel which my cicerone assured me was the right one, and enquired of a man who was sitting in the room on the ground-floor, if Charlton lodged there, that being the name of the object of my search.

"He did not know, he was sure; Charlton might, or he might not—people came one day, and they went away again the next day; sometimes they went to the workhouse, and sometimes they died; and besides that, those who lived there the longest never told their names; for why should they?"

I was, therefore, obliged to go about the building to ascertain for myself. There were sights of pity both in back rooms and front rooms; but with him whom I tried to find, I could not meet. At length I perceived some broken and crazy steps, which led into a cellar, and I descended them. Upon the lowest stair, crouched together, sat the unhappy Charlton. Upon a heap of shavings, at the further end of the cellar, the damp upon the walls of which was hanging thickly and heavily, his meagre partner rested. The roof of this cellar was so low that the aged couple could not stand upright, and many days had they now sojourned there.

The poor man looked petrified at seeing a human being, and endeavoured to shrink away. Upon hearing my voice, however, he instantly recollected me, and began to express, in a few broken sentences, his pleasure at my visit, and to tell me of the sufferings which he had endured since he last beheld me. "They shoved me away from the court, where I was awaiting for you;" he said—"they soon got tired of my old woman at her neighbour's, and drove her out, too, and we starved about the streets, till a kind man took pity on us, and let us come into this cellar; but it's so bitter cold and so low, it makes her rheumatics so bad, not being able to raise her body up; and the chill adds to it as well." I called out for the porter above, and he managed to get the bedstead down the narrow staircase. The eyes of the old man quite flashed with joy when he looked

upon it. "I shall be happy now," he said, and he threw himself upon the couch. He soon rose with a groan. "It's too late, Sir," said he, "I shall never be able to stretch myself straight again."

Those who peruse my narratives, will be kind enough to understand, once for all, that when I speak, in my present work, of the relief which I have bestowed upon any object of pity, I speak of myself merely as the almoner of others: kind and valued friends, who have ever been willing to aid me in my undertakings, have been abundantly so in furtherance of the exertions I have made in the cause of the poor and the miserable. It is requisite I should name this, for if those of my readers who have the misfortune to number me among their personal acquaintance, supposed that I meant to say I had gold of my own wherewith to render comfortable the naked, the houseless, and the starving, they would certainly at once pronounce my book to be one of entire fiction. An explanation, therefore, was called for, before I could add, that I saw to the old man, who is the subject of this sketch, being provided with a good room, strengthening food, and strong and warm winter clothing. I seek no honour for myself—Alas! how little is it my due!

I have another piece of information for my readers, if they have not been clever enough to discover it already. It is this: that I am a prosy man, fond of diverging from the subject before me, and indulging in prolix dissertations, of little profit either to others or to myself. But the world must be content to take me as they find me, or to abandon me altogether. This second caution, is a preliminary to my acquainting the public, that on the evening after the events I have been describing, I threw myself into an arm-chair, in my study, and took up a sheet of paper with the intention of picturing an ideal scene betwixt the unfortunate octogenarian and myself. I imagined to myself that I had called upon the old man, and carried with me an album, bidding him write in it some account of his life and sufferings. "Make a commencement," said I to him in this scrap-book. I intend to keep it for such gloomy subjects. Put freely into it a narrative of your sad career." The aged pauper stared at me, astonished at the strange nature of my request. "Nay," said I, urging him vehemently, "write—write." His countenance gathered even more than its accustomed severity and firmness, and he answered, "You ask me to write a beginning, but wherefore should I do so? Nothing that I have ever begun has ended well; I, a wanderer and an outcast of four-score years. I have often written, and I have always done so in vain. I have sued to a rich man for my dying relations; to one with thousands and tens of thousands at his command, and sued to no purpose. To me no blessings flow. I began life in misery; I shall end it in despair. I often appear to myself to have been excluded at once from the comforts of Time, and the hopes of Eternity. If, however, I should hold firm to my resolve, to indite nothing whatever in the volume which you have placed

in my unwilling hands, the book might be charged with (oh ! most dreadful of all sins in the opinion of men of the present day !)—charged with being destitute. For this reason do I then consent to make a commencement. But how shall I stop when I once begin ? I should dread to pause,



for might I not then be accused of stopping ? Poverty must not rest. It very often seems to me, in my meditations on these things, that people always couple the idea of sin and shame with pauperism and poverty. They imagine that ever in 'the lowest depth' of destitution, there is "a lower deep" of guilt and depravity. This is one of the bitterest portions of distress ; this forms the very dregs in the cup of the beggar's wretchedness.

"I *will* write ; but not for your sake, or for your asking. For you, the world has its gifts and offerings, its fruits and flowers. But it may be, that at some distant period, (for who can foresee the far future ?) some wretch may enter his lone room and find this book before him. He may cast himself down, without one hope, one desire ; but with the feeling in his mind that he could bear—aye, and rejoice at,—an earthquake, however fearful it might be in its character, if it served to move a little further from him, that piece of the cold earth upon which he has stood for years, without one tie to bind him to the scenes of his early childhood, and to his native land. With the feeling that he could delight in exquisite pain, if it forced him, even in spasmodic wildness, to raise those hands which have so long hung dejectedly by his side, without one motive to make him elevate them ; since his starved and sickly child, whose feeble frame he for years sup-

ported in his tender arms, was taken from him by a lengthened and painful death. With the feeling that he could be enraptured with the bloody battle field, though covered with dead bodies, and tortured living sufferers, and in the conflict of rough soldiery care not the issue, so he might meet his fellow, as man to man—as man and man; and not, as had been his lot from infancy, as man and pauper!

“With the feeling that he could enjoy a devouring pestilence, which, slaying its tens of thousands, forgot not even him, rather than die a slow *natural* death. (As it is falsely called when joyous nature is all life, all glad activity in its very principle.) And, while the wretch of whom I have thus spoken, may be tossing madly about, (as if his jaded and meagre limbs were being torn from one another by those fiercest of all horses—the passions of a desperate and ruined mind!—those steeds which will bear no control—which need no whip to urge them to their cruel purpose—which are terrible in their nature, implacable and unrelenting in their design)—then may he seize with avidity the book with which his hand may come in contact, pouncing upon it as something by which to get away from himself—and raising it to his weak and glaring eyes with that eagerness which is the characteristic look of him who can gain nothing by thus looking. To him, all books, in truth, are but as those semblances of books which adorn the libraries of would-be literary gentlemen—mere boards with a game inside,—to be played against himself; and his games are for ever those of loss and ruin—while yet they are for ever solitary ones. Strange contradiction this may appear, nevertheless such is the force of his cruel destiny.

“Yet if the hapless wretch raised this book to his eyes, and found it an empty void, he might dash it from him with violence upon the bare floor, he might spurn it with his foot to the furthest corner, and might abandon himself to a gloomy, a terrible, a *last* despair. He might exclaim in the frenzy of madness, that everything was a blank—his tortured mind—his useless and o’erwearied life!

“But if he find ought within the book, it may induce him yet to live. To read the awful account of my sufferings and my woes, may carry his attention far off from his own griefs—in an acute angle, sharp by another’s pangs.

“With this possibility before me, therefore, I am contented to write in the volume which you place before me. I shall not have passed through my earthly pilgrimage in vain, if this one point be accomplished. Yes! if I have turned one mind—one undying mind, from its own inward desolation, then when the grave receives into its ready arms, this jaded and wasted body, it will not be truly said of me that I lived without pleasure, or without benefit a lightning-withered tree, in the branches of which no timid bird could find a place of rest, or from the leaves of

which, no troubled songster could find ought to make its rifled nest more comfortable. I shall be content even if the saddened man close the book to laugh at the fool who commenced writing a volume for the sake of the wretched and the despised."

I presume that by this time my reader is thoroughly tired of my flight of fancy, and that he wishes me to return to real life, however melancholy may be the narrative to which I may call his attention.

Well, then, starting up from the trance into which I had fallen, I determined to sally out forthwith (although the evening was far advanced), and to bend my footsteps in a direction the most likely to bring me again among the sad and the sorrowful. And whither does the peruser of my *Chronicles* think that I wended my way? To one of the most lively and merry situations in all London;—to a Gin Shop! That burning spot upon the pallid face of poverty! I know of nothing so utterly wretched, so hopelessly miserable in this mighty metropolis—overflowing as it is with the deep streams of woe,—as a gorgeously ornamented, dazzlingly, resplendent and busily frequented Gin shop! The sound of mirth is there, to be followed by the silence of trembling afterthought. The appearance of unusual life is there, to be succeeded by a gloom more fearful and more tremendous than the shadow of death! I chose for my place to reconnoitre, the exterior of a house of this description in Drury Lane.

A lamp of gigantic size, was suspended over the door, barrels of stupendous magnitude were placed conspicuously in view, and boards were hung outside, informing the public of the circumstance of the proprietor of the house having just received 20,000 gallons of white brandy. The entrance to the palace of the Fire King,—for such might not incorrectly be the denomination of him who reigns there, and rules over the burning spirits,—was ornamented with pillars in imitation of marble. A fortune had been expended in decking out the building, for the purpose of taking away from the poor their last sad fragment of comfort, and ruining them alike in purse and health, in reputation and in virtue; of leaving them but the refuse of a degraded and a dishonorable existence! Around the portals, huddled together the maimed and limping objects of poverty and vice, crawling about and groaning for pain as they crawled, leaning upon crutches to which their sins had compelled them to have recourse. I do believe from my heart, that if the Almighty Ruler of all things were to will the destruction of this highly favoured land, a land which it is among my most earnest prayers that He may mercifully continue to spare, and to bless, He could not send upon it a more terrible and certain scourge than the permission that these receptacles of vice and wretchedness should multiply and abound. The pestilence might walk abroad in the noonday, and lay its victims prostrate at its feet; the sword of the enemy might be unsheathed but to conquer, but in both these cases, the children of those who fell, might raise their country to the same lofty position in which it

once stood, when the brave and the good loved it at once as the land of their birth, and the scene of their glories. But through the means of the gin-shop, the noble feeling of patriotism in a whole nation is subdued; purity of character is for ever sullied; and the soul, which was destined to be the companion, throughout eternity, of saints and martyrs, of patriarchs and prophets, of angels and archangels, nay, even to ENJOY the presence of the Deity Himself, becomes an awful associate for the dullest and most brutal of the beasts which perish, but ah! how little resembling them in their fulfilment of the purposes of their being, and in their performance of the will of Him who created them for His honour! The hand of the Lord might pour out the cup of His just anger, and fever and famine might follow as the punishment of our national sins, but the draught would not be a death-potion, so long as it left our people with the dignity of man, with the likeness to their Maker, undestroyed. "Let my country fall into the hands of the Lord, and let it not fall into the hands of man!"

Amongst the numerous objects of well-placed pity, who surrounded the doors of the brilliant edifice, the difficulty which I experienced was not to select a being sufficiently wretched to afford scope for my mission of mercy, but to choose out the most miserable of all this hapless brotherhood. However, I found one, perhaps the most strikingly woe-begone of the multitude. An aged woman stood before me, with a baby in her attenuated arms; the old person and the tiny child appeared almost as one and the same thing. They seemed identical in squalidness, in weakness and in woe. Yet there was, alas! one sad mark which distinguished the woman from her comparatively innocent burthen, for she had the look of vice upon her countenance; more terrible in its effects than the most abject poverty, or the roughest treatment from mankind. She appeared to have formerly been of criminal habits, and although age and care "had written strange defeature" upon her countenance, and had effectually stopped her in her career of guilt, she bore the tokens of it stamped upon her in unchanging characters. Her hair was thin and grey, but she had the little which remained carefully rolled up in tight curl, as if she thought by such means still to make believe it was beautiful; to weave her scanty and dry locks into unholy chains. Alas! guilt, when it makes a prey, never altogether forsakes it. The same hand which writes upon its victim that she has been weighed in the balance of what is right, and pure, and good, and has been found wanting, inscribes at the same moment, that the best kingdom of the unhappy one—the possession of innocence and peace, has for ever departed from her.

How can I describe adequately and correctly the little heir of misery whom the woman bore in her arms. Its weak eyes struggled with the strong light issuing from the gin-shop; but ever and anon, gave up the unequal contest and closed subdued and overcome. Its hands hung listlessly, as if it knew that it was useless to put them forth, trusting for suc-

cour and for kindness. Its covering, for it would be mockery to call it a robe, and folly to denominate it a frock, was torn at the shoulder, and discovered a part of its skeleton body, blue with the bitter cold, and the pitiless frost, which had nipped and pinched it. It endeavoured to bring out the feeble lisplings of infancy—sounds usually so longed for, and so prized by a parent's heart, the sweetest harmony to a father's ear,—and it could hardly do so, so chilled was the infant with famine and exposure. At length it articulated, and called “papa!” at the gin-shop door. Alas! that such a term should have to be uttered by the tender offspring to its natural guide and protector, at such a place as that! How many infants are there who have to seek their fathers there, and to call for them thence, to perform the offices of gentleness and love, and to call for them in vain. I easily discerned how anxiously the woman was hoping that some person whom she had come thither to seek, would soon come forth; and that the purpose of her visit there was to lure some one, (the father of the baby in her arms) from the shameful recesses in which he was hidden. The woman, however, as soon as she perceived that I was watching her, endeavoured to win my compassion by pinching, as she thought unseen by me, the poor little creature whom she carried, thus causing it to cry within my hearing. I should not have felt so sorrowful as I presently did, had the infant burst into a flood of tears; any child, when ill-used thus, would have wept aloud, but I was deeply moved to find that when the baby was pinched, it *could not* cry: the current of its tears was already dried up. Had it continued to have the power to cry, nature must have supplied it with an unusual, an unparalleled stock of tears. But compassion was the due of such a child as the one I had then before me, for causes infinitely more sad than the denial of bread to its ravenous jaws, or of a home in which it might be warm and comfortable. It seemed doomed to pass through the troubled scene of life without instruction, and without counsel; to crave for the wisdom and the peace which Religion only can bestow, and to hear nothing but the scoff of the blasphemer, and the brutal oath of the drunkard. No gentle lip was ever to teach it the words of truth and of consolation—to instruct it in the reasons of its own misfortune, to administer to it the medicine which the word of Life affords, to cure the ills of poor mortality. No pious lady was to instruct it in the sacred pages,—to tell it what was in the beginning of creation,—alas! it knew, and would know—nothing of beginnings—it was always old! The hand of death had been on it at the same period as the hand of life.

The two monarchs who rule over the rival kingdoms of existence and destruction, had struggled together for it, even from its mother's womb, and although, as yet, the latter had not finally secured his prey, he had inscribed his characters, as a victor, triumphantly upon it—the writing of age and desolation!

I mentioned to the woman that I had perceived the manner in which

she had pinched the poor baby to make it cry, and she instantly began to use towards me the lowest and most insulting terms—Language such as it would be a disgrace to hear issuing from the lips of the veriest savage, the most abandoned thief and reprobate, poured from the mouth of a woman! Awful profanation! Of a woman!—from whom the words of love and fondness, of pity and of gentleness alone should flow. I spoke to her temperately and calmly upon the impropriety of making use of expressions so coarse and degrading, and told her of Him to whom man would have to render a strict account of every idle word. Alas! you might have said, when you heard her reply, that she knew no God, for she laughed at His great and awful name. Yet when I presently reasoned with her, and named to her that she was destined for high and glorious purposes, that parents had doubtless once watched over her, and hoped that she would act as a chaste and virtuous woman in her after life; at the very sound of the name of those parents, on whom the cold grave had long since closed, and who, for years before their death, had been the despised inmates of a village workhouse—at that very sound I say, the stern heart of that hapless and guilty creature melted within her. She showed, (alas! it was by an oath that she evidenced it—but it was an imprecation upon herself,) that there were still within her the remains of ancient goodness—that love, the first-born of heaven, had not taken his flight from her seared and well-nigh callous heart, and, that, although she attempted to hide the last remnants of virtue from the inspection of the world—there was still a holiest of holies within that veil.

I have often observed the most abandoned and depraved of the weaker sex, and I desire to testify to this fact, that I never have seen one woman, whether in the purlieu of Vinegar-yard, Boswell-court, or the Seven Dials in whom this light from heaven seemed utterly quenched.

Men have I often beheld about whom there seemed to be no redeeming point—no trace of the virtue which they had forfeited—but amongst those who are formed as the improvers and the friends of man, I could not produce one such instance. Drunken, dissolute and degraded, they may be, but the brightness of excellency is not extinguished, however it may be tarnished. Notice, Reader, I pray you, a group of the worst females, gathered around a den of lowest infamy, and hear them pitying a little child, who is toddling along, barefooted: or listen to them speaking about some poor baby “who’s been tossing about all night long, with the pain,” and mark the heart-broken manner in which they talk of the sufferings of the infant of a mere neighbour, and, when you have thus observed and attended, testify whether the spark of kindness, which could only be lighted from a heaven of mercy, is not latent within the heart of the most lost of women.

Perceiving that the woman was softened by the mention of the parents whom she had lost many a long and sorrowful year, I thought

I would persevere in my attempt to aid her, and thus I might induce her, perhaps, to lead a better life than that which, apparently, she was now living, while at the same time I assisted her in her worldly comfort.

"Why do you wait outside such a place as this," said I, addressing her. "You would, surely, be better at your own house, than out in the cold; and with that little infant too."

"Would you have me leave my boy to die in the open streets?" answered the woman, sharply.

"Heaven forbid!" replied I, to her interrogation. "Is your son, then, in the gin shop?"

"To be sure he is," were the words of the hapless mother; "where else should I ever find him? He's drunk from morning to night, and from night to morning, and he beats me when he comes home in that state, till I think often that he'll kill me."

"He ought to be strictly dealt with," said I, "punishment might reform him from such undutiful and unnatural conduct."

"But why should you hurt him? answered *the mother*, "it's not his fault that he does so—he always saw his father do so before him."

"Your husband, then, was given to the same low and profligate courses?"

"Ah! that he was; and used to stay away from home for days and nights together, and at last he used to be brought home dead drunk upon a shutter, by some of the fellows who had been drinking with him."

"I wonder you could continue to live with such a man; such conduct was quite unbearable."

"To tell you the truth," said the woman, and she lowered her voice to a mere whisper, and placed her mouth close to my ear; "to tell you the truth he had no happiness at home, and I don't wonder he wished to keep away from it."

"Poverty," I replied, "I should think, might be borne more easily than by sacrificing health and life to ruinous and destroying liquors."

"It was not for the poorness he stayed away—It was not for that—You know for what it was."

I looked at her tawdry earrings, and her wandering eye, and I could not deny it.

"It was *you*, then," I remarked to her, after a brief pause—"you who caused the ruin of your husband and your son: *their* guilt and *their* degradation rest upon *you*, and you must bear the consequences of the sin for which you have to blame yourself."

"I have been bad enough, Sir, that I know," muttered the poor woman, "but it was not *all* my own fault; there are others, and gentlefolk too, to be blamed for it, as well as me."

"What do you mean?" enquired I.

"It's a long story," answered the woman, "and you don't want to hear it from an old body like me."

"I should wish to hear it," said I, "but I would rather walk on whilst you tell it me. I am afraid that we shall be listened to here, and that a crowd of those people who are near, will gather round us."

"I would not leave here for all you could give me," was her final determination, "Bob is here, and if I left him drunk, as I know he is, who can tell what would become of him."

"Pray proceed," said I.

"I used, when I was a young girl, that was many a long year ago, to live in the country, with my old father, who was the blacksmith of the place, and I used to be as happy and as gay as the birds which I used to see there; not like these poor canaries I see now hanging up at the top of our wretched hovels, so that you say 'poor birds, how high up they are,' when they really wish to be a thousand times higher up—in the clouds above—poor dried-up things! I used to be singing from the time I got up, to the time I went to bed; and father used to say, 'Ah Bess! you're a merry-hearted lass—you were born to be happy, and you'll take care to be so, come what may.' Good old man! he didn't know what he was talking about. When I got up to be a big girl, eighteen years old, I think I was, a young man, the son of the old sexton, came down from London to see his father, and proud enough I can tell you the old people were about him. He was so tall and so handsome, and so good a scholar, (he was employed in a large manufactory in town)—that all the girls in the village were looking at him, and thinking of him. Well, who but *me* did he single out of all the lasses in the place, to keep company with! and I soon loved him with all my heart and soul. The gentry laugh at the love of the poor, sir, but it's just as strong and as true as theirs, for all that! Happy were the old sexton and his wife, and my father and mother, on the day of the wedding, for it soon came to that, as you may suppose.

"'I'm glad about it neighbour,' said my father to his, 'because the young man's a sober, steady lad, and that's more than money, if he had ever so much of it.'—

"'And I'm happy, too, old squire,' answered the sexton, 'for I'm sure the girl will make him a constant true wife, and that's what a man ought to look to in such matters.'

"It's a sad thing sir, to think how wrong they both were in what they thought of us! Well, we came to London, and lived in a nice little street, and everything went on quiet and pleasant. We had a sweet little boy born—the one who's now drunk in the gin-shop—and our love got greater than before. My husband used to go to his master's in the morning as brisk as a bee, and at night he'd sing to me, just as gay as if he wasn't tired at all. He never put a drop of anything to his lips, except a half-pint of beer, or so, in the course of the day, to let him go on with his day's-work: and I cared for no man on earth (except my poor old father) besides my own help-mate. On the Sundays we put on our best clothes

and trudged off to the parish church, arm in arm, quite glad to go there and hear the Minister. Our Parents used to write to us and say how pleased they were to learn how we loved one another, how sober and steady my goodman was, and how we kept to our Church.

“So things went on, sir, for some time, but they changed sadly afterwards. The great Manufacturers who had engaged my husband, all of a sudden became Bankrupts. One day they were employing six hundred men—and the next day, they were in the *Gazette*, as it is called. Of course my husband and myself were thrown out of bread, and were in a sad way about it. ‘Never mind, Bess,’ he used to say to me—‘don’t you be cast down—I’ll go about and find a job some where.’ And he went, sir, day after day, calling about at all the great shops and counting houses, but it wouldn’t do. ‘They weren’t in want of hands,’ they told him—he had better look in again in a month’s time,—there were more wanting work than could get it by any chance.’

“My goodman did not soon despair about it. But weeks passed on, and months, and it was still the same reply to him. And all this time I was pining with my little boy at home, with barely enough to support life from what we had laid by. After a long while, my husband gave up all hope of getting engaged any where, for those people, where he had called many times over, began to be tired of him, and speak rough when he came. —‘What shall I do, Bess?’ he said to me one night, ‘I am starving, and you and the baby are famished. I could eat my own flesh; and to see you and the child so pale and thin is worse than dying myself a hundred deaths.—I cannot sit at home, or I shall go mad—I must go out and walk to drive away my thoughts.’ So saying, he jumped up, and was rushing out of the door: I could not let him go alone, for I was not sure what he was going to do—perhaps to throw himself off the bridge, or to hang himself, for he was in such a mood for it. I took up the baby, and out we all went. We walked up one street and down another; we crossed from one side to another; we rushed up a court when we came to it, and rushed back as fast as we had hurried up; and all the while we never spoke a word, nor even looked at anything. Why should we have talked? to have told him that I was perishing—where was the use? He had already told me that he was. The little baby moaned now and then—that was all—it was a very low moan; but we heard it, we both heard it—though the noise of carriages and carts was almost deafening from its loudness. At last we stopped before an eating-shop, and gazed in with longing eyes. There were slices of meat which we should have called raw and coarse when we came to London, and there was the soup, as they called it; ‘the ghost of the gravy of the day before,’ as my husband used to call such thin watery stuff. We looked so eager in now, that—you can’t fancy it, Sir; we devoured it with our eyes in such a way that you would have thought if it had been given us we could not have eaten it a *second time*.

"After a long time, we left the shop-window and went home, with all the cravings of hunger still upon us. We got into the house, and we sat down; and we looked at each other, and then we looked away again. We thought of to-morrow, and we knew that it must be such a day as this had been, and like many that had come before it. We pawned everything we had—our table, our chairs, our bed, our bedding, all were pawned, and we sat down on the bare ground and tried to weep, but we could not. We were utterly destitute.—Hours rolled on and we were still destitute.

"At last, one morning my husband said to me, 'I tell you what it is, Bess, I must go out and beg.'—

"'Do not do that,' I said—for I was brought up quite averse to such a thing as begging—'let us starve, rather than go and ask like a pauper.'

"'Do you see the child, Bess?' he asked.

"'I am always looking at it,' I answered.

"'Do you not see how thin and pale it's getting?' he enquired again.

"'I was obliged to tell him that I did.

"'That's enough, Bess, said he'—that's enough—I shall go and ask for alms.'

"He went out, and, as I heard afterwards, he besought every one he met—he prayed them to think of his poor wife at home, and his little infant!—they bid him go and get work—but they did not help him to get it. They insulted his pride, (for though he was a beggar he was proud) by not believing his story—some threatened that they would have him taken up for annoying people—and many of the young men told him to 'get out of the way, for they were in a hurry to get to the theatre or the concert.' He came back, Sir, at night, if you will credit me, without a copper to buy a piece of bread, or anything to cover us from the cold. And this was the same for days and days after; he asked the means of life for his own wife and his offspring—they spoke to him of the constable and the prison. These were nice words to be used, Sir, to a father and a husband because he wouldn't sit at home and see his family die for want! Aye, Sir! and I'll warrant you these same gentlemen went to their own fire-sides, and took their little ones on their knees, and spoke words of love to their wives, and thought that they themselves were Christians! I'll be bound some of them told their children how a bold beggar man had bothered them on their journey, and was impudent enough to follow them almost the whole distance home—and I daresay that the little ones cried out that 'he was a very naughty man to follow dear papa in that way;' and perhaps their mother answered 'Yes, that he was, my loves—mind that you're never so wicked as he.' And after all, they said their prayers, and went to comfortable beds, and thought that they were righteous, and that the blessing of heaven was upon them.—And we were lying on the cold boards, and looking by the faint light which came in at the window, upon the bare walls!

"I've told you Sir, long ago, (for I'm telling you a tiresome tale,) how fond we used to be once of our Church, and how regular we used to go there;—but now it was an altered matter.

" 'What's the use, Bess,' my husband got to say to me, 'of our going to church, and yet we're never the better for it. Ben, round the corner, who sits and drinks all through the Sunday, and swears like a trooper, he keeps his place well enough; while I'm starving, yet I'm praying like a saint.'

"So after a little we left off our Church altogether, and would sit grumbling and groaning at home, all through the Lord's day. Once my husband used to point out the spire of the parish Church hard by us, and say, 'I love the sight of that, it puts me in mind how happy and joyful we've felt in the building below it.' But now, when we had been walking about the streets in hope of getting some relief, and all in vain, he would say, 'I hate that spire, Bess. It points out where we live, or rather where we starve. It marks out the spot where we've got to go and starve with our little infant.'

"On a Saturday, it was his custom to call to me 'Here, Bess, here's our treat-day coming round again, let us put every thing nice and neat for to-morrow, so that nothing may stop us from being before the Minister.' Now, on the seventh day, he'd say, 'Well, there's another week over, and that's a good job; we're so much nearer the grave, and out of the misery and want of the world.' And when I've said to him, 'don't you remember the good Parson telling us to value our time more than any thing else; and to mind that we didn't waste it?' He would turn from me and laugh a bitter laugh. 'It's the precious gold,' I added, 'he would say, which is worth more than rubies. Let it not go down the stream unemployed.' 'I'm overjoyed,' he would reply, 'to see it go down; for this gold, of which the Minister talked, has rested with a dead weight upon my heart; it's a false coin, and it's no value to us.'

"So we came to live almost like heathens, never thinking of Church, nor our duty; only spending all our days in grumbling at our hard fate; and sure it was a hard one.

"But I am coming now to a part of my story that I'm almost ashamed to speak of—though I fancied the day for feeling so had gone by with me. We had been turned out of our comfortable rooms for debt, and had been forced to hire a wretched little attic in a damp and dirty house. All things round me were full of misery and disgust. My husband's eyes, that I used to admire before all others, had grown glaring with despair and dismay, his cheek-bones stood up, his voice had grown thick and husky, his form, that was once so manly, was now bent in two; my child was ill for lack of food; and I felt my head whirling round with grief and destitution. One night I had been watching by my infant for hours, and had listened to its faint and constant sighs. 'Bread, Mamma,' it whispered, and I had not a crumb for its lips.—The moonlight struggled through

the window, and made the room bright with its light. 'Shine not here, moon,' I cried, in an agony—'shine not upon my baby.'—I have never thought of you but I have thought also of the village churchyard and the cold and quiet dead.—'Shine not upon my child!' Desperate with the idea that before long I should see my husband mad with starvation, and should behold my darling laid in its last home—I made up my mind to that which I blush to name to you, but which my tawdry dress and my coarse look—for I know it to be such—must tell to you. You start from me!—you loathe me! you loathe me!—you say to yourself (I know you do)—'This woman with her child at her feet, and her husband near her, determined upon courses of shame and of sin.' I am bad enough, I am aware: but pity the mother's fondness, yes, and the wife's too, for, strange as it may sound, it was for their sakes alone that I did that which handed down infamy to my offspring, and brought disgrace upon my husband! On the morrow, Sir, was my intention brought into practice.

"You know, Sir, that London swarms with men of wealth—with noblemen and gentlemen who care not for a husband's honour or a woman's fame.

"It is their delight to blacken her character, and to blight his happiness. You can easily imagine, then, Sir, that where the woman was willing to err, there was no scarcity of those with whom she could do so.

"Subjects such as these ought not to be spoken of by me. It is enough for me to say, Sir, that on the evening of that day I hastened to my home with gold in my pocket, and with a ruined name. I was dancing with joy that I bore with me the means to make my infant thrive and fatten, and to make my husband eat, and smile at the long untasted meat. I hurried to the attic, and entered with my face beaming with gladness; my husband was resting dejectedly, leaning his pallid face against the wall, and my infant was crying in the corner, and pressing its cold lips together. They scarce noticed me as I took my seat upon the ground close by my husband's side. Upon my doing so he started with surprise.

" 'What, have you come back, Bess?' said he, stretching out his hand to me.

"I was ashamed to hold out mine in return!

" 'We shall soon be starved, Bess,' he muttered, 'but we shall die together, honest and loving, and that's one blessing after all.'

"I turned away my face to hide the blush. 'We shall not perish,' I answered, with sudden vigour! 'Here is gold; take it and buy bread with it, for yourself and for your son.' My husband burst into a flood of tears.

" 'My guardian angel,' he exclaimed; 'my truest and best friend, you have saved us all!' and he printed a burning kiss upon my false lips.

"He sprang upon his feet to rush out and buy bread to keep life within us; but he suddenly paused; 'But how did you get the money, Bess?' he asked me. 'No matter,' said I—'no matter.' 'I cannot eat the bread without I know,' he continued. Did you borrow the gold?'—'Who would

trust me?' 'Did you beg for it?' 'Who would give it me?' 'Did you'—— He looked at me fixedly for a moment, and then fell like a corpse upon the ground.

"It was a long time before my husband came to himself again. But when he did, he was a sadly altered man. He used to look miserable, but now he looked heart-broken. He suffered me to go and buy food out of my badly earned gains, for the support of the child; but he turned away with loathing from the sight of the bread and the meat. 'You hate me,' I said, I know that you do; and I feel that I deserve it.' 'I don't hate you,' he answered me; 'why should I? I know that you acted from love to me and to the baby, and I *ought* to be obliged to you.' 'Do not mock me,' I cried passionately, 'I know that I am vile, and bad, and I merit your worst opinion.' Yes, Sir, never did he use a harsh word, or an unkind term to me, but it seemed as his heart had been chilled by the cold, and was turning into stone. His eye never rested now upon me; but went rather to *anything* than myself.

"His life had been made one of hopeless wretchedness by *me*—by *me*! who would have lain down mine for his happiness.

"One morning he rose from the ground and hastened to the door—I jumped up to follow him, but he waved me back to my seat. I returned there, and allowed him to wander forth alone.

"Hour after hour passed on, but he came not again to his home. Evening closed round, but my room continued blank and empty.

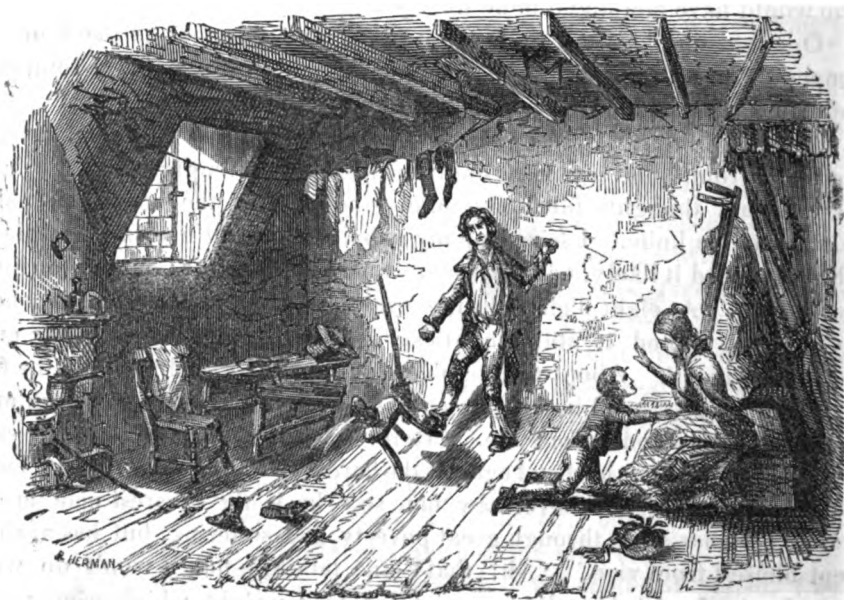
"Gloomy thoughts filled my mind—thoughts of the horse-pond, the halter, and the knife. I seized up my baby, and sought him in every place where I judged it likely, or even possible, that he might be; but my journey was in vain. At eight o'clock in the evening, jaded and worn, I reached my garret, to find it still tenantless. I sat down in silent woe and waited the result. About twelve o'clock I heard a knocking with the fist at the street door, and hurried down and opened it, when two rough and brutal persons stood before me. 'Here, take the drunken fellow,' said they, and pushed my husband against the hard wall. 'He is *not* drunk,' I answered them,—'for I never saw him so,—he is the soberest man in the world. He has gone through great poverty and suffering, but has always kept himself from vice.' 'Ah! that's fine talking—but it won't do with us.'—I seized my husband's arm, and the dead weight which came upon me almost brought me to the ground. 'He is ill,' I groaned. The savages laughed at my fears. I spoke to him and he looked vacantly in my face,—and tried to say something, but his tongue could not move; *I was forced to see that he was intoxicated.* With difficulty I helped him to our garret, and he fell upon the floor, and lay like a log for many hours,—helpless and stupid. The next day the effects of the spirits which he had taken, began to wear off. But the illness followed which always does to people not used to drinking. 'Have you given yourself to these courses,

CHRONICLES OF THE CAREWORN.

Love?" said I, 'if you have, my misery is complete, and ruin stares us in the face.' 'I *shall* give myself to them,' he answered me. 'If you knew what I've felt since you came back, you wouldn't wonder that I would spend the only money I could make, to drown and deaden thought: that I would part with my last penny for that purpose, if my wife and my child died for want of a roll to keep the life in their bodies.'

"Alas! I could not urge him otherwise.—And if afterwards I took courage, and spoke to him of the famine which was eating me up, or called upon him to look at his child; if I brought to his memory his steady conduct in youth, and the way in which he had long borne up against sorrow; he had but to mention *that night*—and all my words failed me. 'I was sober, I know it,' he would reply, 'but it was before then. I could weather the storm when my *true* wife helped me to do so—I could hope for better days,—but now—now one dark and unchanging night lies before me.'

"For years, long, long years, he continued the course which he had begun. He could, by exertion, manage to earn a few shillings—enough to make him every day, hopelessly, brutally drunk. 'The life of a drunkard's



wife is one which cannot be described. It mocks all language. To support myself, and my child—who was more dear to me than my own soul;—and to drive away thought, according to the notions of my fallen mind;—I followed that mode of life which has left upon me its deep marks of sin and shame—marks which only the grave-worm will have power to remove. One spring of joy, and one only, was still my portion. I know not, Sir, if you are a parent; but if you are, you are but a father, and therefore cannot tell the love of a mother's heart. My son, the only fruit of my marriage,

was my one source of delight; but that source was a mighty one. To try and forget my base and wicked life, when I came to my own home,—to take my son upon my knee, and teach him words of truth and virtue—to tell him of the days I used to pass in the sweet country with his pious grandfather, (that dear father who never lived to know our troubles, even our first *light* ones; for so our first now seem to me), and to prompt the boy to acts of holiness, furnished my only pleasure—but that pleasure was rapture.

“My son loved me with a return of affection, and welcomed me to my garret with a beaming eye, and a merry laugh. Alas! even that one drop of honey was taken from my bitter cup. One night my husband came from the public house in a fit of drunken rage; he swore at me, he cursed me. I answered him in anger—and he then spoke of how I had treated him, and what had driven him to his present courses. My Son, now a stripling, started to his feet, and the colour rose to his cheek. ‘It is not so, mother,’ said he, ‘it cannot be.’ I quailed before the look of my own child. ‘It is not so, mother, tell me it is not, and I will bless you,’ he exclaimed. I was silent. ‘Mother, it is not so,’ he said imploringly. ‘Care not to deny it in words, but only show me by a sign, by the moving of your head, that it is not so;’ and he fell upon his knees before me. ‘Is it true then, mother?’ I bowed my stricken head. The boy started to his feet. He stopped not for cap or anything,—he rushed down the stairs, and the door closed upon my son, and my last glimmering ray of hope!

Years passed by, but my child was still absent from his home. Often and often did I seek him in the crowded streets of London, and in its silent courts and alleys, but all my search was vain. I had none now to share my cheerless room, but my husband, who never came in the evening-time, excepting in a state of total intoxication. Still it was something sweet to see him at all, for I had loved him in times long gone by;—he had been my first, and, indeed, my only love. A low fever which broke out and carried off hundreds in our wretched neighbourhood, now attacked him, and after two days laid before me a lifeless corpse, the partner of my youth and early hopes.

They bore him to the grave, and left me to sit and sigh through the long days, over my most wretched life. I would have blessed the burning fever had he laid his furnace hand upon me; but it was not so that I was to die.

Every thought of mine now turned to my long absent son,—he was the only tie that bound me to earth, and my kind; but how strong and how firm was that one tie! A mother’s love lives on, through neglect and ill-treatment, through sorrow, and through suffering, through life, and in death. The memory of my son was lovely to me when all besides was bitterness. The hope of again seeing him, was light that broke on my thick darkness. It was my consolation, when cold was chilling my veins,

and hunger was gnawing my flesh, to fancy that my offspring was honest, and good, and respected ;—was too great in disposition, and in society, to be named in the same breath with the wretched mother who had degraded him. I expected (for I always hoped on), to find he had become a great man ; loved and looked up to by his fellow-creatures ; for how could I help thinking this, when he had been such a very good boy, and such a very clever one too ? To go on with my long story.—I was one day, some twenty years after my son had left me, passing along Whitechapel, when I came behind a noisy and laughing rabble. You must often have heard such a mob, and seen their merry freaks. Boys were jeering, and calling names ; girls were tittering to the others near them ; men were shouting and swearing ; and women were shaking their heads, and speaking with loud voices about something they were all looking at. I thought there must be some idiot walking through the streets, for such are always fixed upon as butts for brutal jests and malice.

“ I shoved through the crowd to look at the poor object I thought I should find, and saw a faded and profligate looking young man, hardly able to keep himself from falling, he was so dreadfully drunk. The boys pulled his coat, the men joked upon him, and as he turned to curse the mob, he fell upon the pavement in trying to move himself round. Of course this made the laugh louder than before. The glee of the people knew no bounds. Degraded and dissolute as I was, I had still a heart that melted with pity. I had once been carefully brought up, and had been taught to sigh for the evils of others, and not jest upon them. ‘ Help the man up,’ I called out, ‘ he has bruised himself by the fall.’ They looked at me, they saw *what I was*, and they did not deign me an answer.

“ I must do it by myself, then,’ I said, and I caught the arm of the young man, to raise him up. He lay upon his face upon the ground. I tried to assist him, but had not strength. ‘ I would aid you if I could,’ I said to him. He lifted up his head, and smiled on me,—for he was grateful although he was so tipsy. That SMILE ! it was that which I had longed to see through twelve dreary years, and the mother’s eyes now beheld it ;—but, ah me ! ah me ! in a confirmed drunkard.

“ I staggered back some paces, and was forced to lean against a railing for support. ‘ Why the woman’s drunk too,’ the boys screamed out at the top of their voices. ‘ She’s drunk herself, and she wanted to help up a drunken fellow.’ ‘ Heaven bless her,’ said the man who lay upon the ground before them. These were the very words for which I had sighed and longed, day after day, and night after night, through many a long year, and they thrilled my heart with pleasure, such as I would not have parted with for the wealth of the whole universe. ‘ And heaven bless you, my child,’ I exclaimed, almost frantic with joy, ‘ for those loving and kind words ;’ and I threw myself upon the bare stones and wept over my son, in the joy of a mother’s heart. He stared at me in deep and troubled thought, half-

sobered by the sudden surprise. Some of the mob laughed the more at this scene, but, as I have told you, there were girls and women there, and *they* did not laugh, for the heart of woman was in their bosom. At this moment, a policeman came bustling through the crowd, and asked why there was such a mob there. The drunken man was pointed out to him; for, as the officer came near, I had got up from the ground. 'Come my friend,' said he, 'you must come with me,' and taking my son by the arm he managed to place him upon his feet. 'You will not take him to the station-house?' I asked imploringly. 'Not if the magistrate's still sitting,' he answered; 'that is, if you'll take care that he gets safe home afterwards.' I promised that I would do so, and begged that he might not be taken to the court. 'My orders are strict,' said the policeman, 'but he'll only be fined five shillings and let go; he has the money about him to pay it, and then he's free again.' So saying, he walked with my son, and I followed close behind. When we arrived at the police-office, I could not bear to go in, but waited at the door to receive my son when the case was over. After half an hour my son came out, the punishment he had borne, for he had had his last five shillings taken from him, appeared to have sobered him greatly. His walk, it is true, was unsteady; but his face showed much more sense than it had done before. He smiled again on me, for he knew me as the same person who had pitied him when others jeered at him. 'Let me see you home?' I said to him, taking his arm. 'Thank you for your help,' he answered me. He was sober enough now to tell me where he lived; it was at a little lodging in a court, off the Whitechapel-road. I could not forbear, as we went along, using the fond terms of 'my boy,' and 'my own son,' to him; for he was the only child I was mother of, and my heart leaped to my mouth every time I said the words. 'Why,' he asked me in a state of half-consciousness,—'why do you call me your son?—for I'm not your son.' 'It's twenty long years since you left your mother's home,' I said, 'but no time could ever make her forget you.' 'Twenty years,' he stammered out,—twenty years, what are you talking about? my mother has been dead long ago.' 'She is not dead, my boy, for she now walks by you and blesses you.' 'She *is* dead;' he pondered as he spoke the words, 'at least, I know I've always told every one so when they asked me about her.' 'Do you not remember,' I asked, (for my greatest wish on earth now was to call these things to his memory), 'do you not remember one evening?'—and my lips refused to do their office.—'One evening,' he said, stupidly, 'I recollect a great many evenings, but they have been in the gin-shop!'—Alas! for such a confession! 'But there was one evening, when you were a boy, your Father was——' 'Drunk,' said he laughing, 'I know that. I often say to people I got this way of life from my old Father, so don't blame me for it.' The thought of the husband of my youth, stabbed my heart like a sharp dagger. I felt that I must go through with my horrid task. 'Do you not recol-

lect that when your father was—not sober—he told his wife—your mother—who was blaming him for his drinking, why he had given himself to it? The colour rose higher than before to his handsome cheek, and a look of entire and instant soberness came over him. ‘I do not know anything about it!’ he exclaimed, ‘I do not wish to know.’ ‘Hear *your mother* tell it you.’ ‘Let me go!’ he said, struggling with manly power,—“I *will* go home and die.” ‘Hear your mother, my son, and give over these habits of wickedness and ruin.’

“He stared at me full in the eyes for some minutes. ‘Mother—dear—dear Mother,’ he sobbed out; and he fell upon my neck, and we mingled our tears of love. Whole years of suffering and shame,—the past—the future—all things were forgotten in the joy of that dear embrace. ‘My son,’ I continued, ‘I have had but one thought for years and years, and that has been of you; I hoped, though I was spurned, and worthy to be spurned by the lowest mob; I should yet see you honoured, great, and good. I meet you, and you are a drunkard; derided by the boys, mocked by the women, and carried away as a prisoner by the constable. How vain were my hopes!’ ‘It is true, Mother,’ he said ‘it is all true; the habit is too fast hold of me now, for me ever to get loose again.’ ‘Say not so my child,’ I cried. ‘But, Mother, I caught it from my Father, and I have no cause to be blamed.’ ‘Speak not now of him, my son, he lies in the cold grave.’ ‘I do not find fault with my Father,’ he urged, ‘he had reason enough, poor man, to make him drink.’ ‘Yes! he had,’ I faltered out, as my tears would let me,—‘in his wife—in your mother’s sins.’ He answered not one word, but hung his head upon his breast.

“An elderly gentleman, very tall and very formal, with a severe cast of countenance, and an austere manner, stopped me at this moment. It seemed that his attention had been called to us, by our earnest speaking, and that he had walked close behind us for some time to hear what it was about.

“He now came before us. ‘Woman,’ he said, ‘is this proper conduct on your part, to blame your son for his intemperance, when that intemperance has been induced by your own sins? Your wicked career led your husband—your dishonoured husband, to seek to drown remembrance in the cup; and it was his example, thus placed before the eyes of his child, which has made him the hopeless drunkard you behold him.’

‘It is true—too true,’ I replied. ‘Woman,’ said the gentleman, ‘you are a disgrace to your sex. Your own unchaste desires have brought utter ruin upon your own family.’ ‘Not so, Sir, oh! not so,’ I cried, ‘It is my guilt that has done all this wrong to those most dear to me; but it was not my own base inclinations that first made me the fallen creature that I am. It was love for them that first made me degrade myself!’ ‘Regard for them?’ said the gentleman. ‘You are hardened in your sins, and make a mockery of my words.’ ‘I am not mocking, Sir; it *was*

affection for my husband and child that made me what I am. I had for months seen my husband getting paler and paler, thinner and thinner, from starvation, and my only child falling a prey to the same cruel death. I had watched them till my brain was dizzy, and my senses almost left me. My husband went and begged in the streets for a penny to buy bread, and he was laughed at. I told every gentleman I met, of my baby's pangs, and my husband's troubles, and they jeered at me. What course remained for me but the one I followed? Let my son place his guilt, and his Father's guilt to my account; but his lost and wretched mother places her's to that of the gentry, like yourself, who never listen to a poor woman's petition for her husband, and turn away even from a mother's agony, if that mother is a humble one.' The gentleman spoke not another word; but he turned down the next street, and hastened upon his way.

"I walked with my son, whose manner was now very tender towards me, to his miserable lodging. 'Don't come in now, Mother,' he said, on our arriving at the door of the house, 'for I am not fit to talk to-day. I am sobered, indeed, but my head whirls with the talk that we have had. Come to me to-morrow morning, before seven, for I go to my work at seven.' 'Good bye, then, my dearest,' I said, and turned away from the door. As I got to the end of the court, however, I heard my son's footstep close behind me, and of course I stopped directly. 'Here are some trifles Mother,' he said, 'pawn them, the cash will get you an honest living till the end of the week, when I get my wages, and I'll then share them with you. If I had money you should have it; but take what I have, and kiss me once more!'

"At six o'clock the next morning I was at my son's lodgings; and early as I was, I found him anxiously waiting for me. He was walking up and down the room, and was dandling in his arms the baby you now see me hold. 'A child,' I cried out to him, 'is that your's, my boy?' 'Yes, Mother, it is mine; it's a poor sickly crying little brat, but *it is* your grandchild, and so you'll love it.' I took the infant out of his arms. The little baby (I see you have been looking at it for some time), would be a nice child if it could be well done by, but I have no means to do more than just keep it alive, and no heart to love it and play with it; it's only its father I can think of. But I fancied that the poor thing knew me for its grandmother directly that it saw me, for it opened its arms, and moved its legs, and crowed and chuckled; Poor thing! I wish I *could* fondle it. 'That child; Mother,' said my son, after a short time, 'tells a sad story of my sins and sorrows. After I left you, I made up my mind to give myself up, like my Father, to drink, as the only way I could find to drown the memory of the hard treatment I thought I had received at the hands of both my Parents. And I *did* give myself up immediately. I had, indeed, been blessed with such talents, that I soon could get a place of good pay, but every evening found me in the gin-shop; and this life I have persevered so in, that I only

wonder at my constitution, which has stood against it. But I was going to tell you that not many years ago, I accidentally got acquainted with one of the best and loveliest girls you ever set your eyes upon. She soon got fond of me ; why, I can't think, when she was so opposite to me in respectability of feeling, and character ; however, love matters do not go by judgment, reason, and all that, as we all know very well. Well ! Mother, she left her fond relations to be my married wife. It was a great change to come from friends who were all trying to please her, to live with a man who came home every evening rude and drunken. But alas ! Mother, so it was. This bad conduct of mine broke Jane's heart, Mother, I do believe, if ever a woman's heart was broken in this world. She died three months after this baby came into the world, and it was our first child. When she was gone, I felt sad and wretched indeed, and the loss of her led me to give myself more than ever to the poison which was, and is, destroying me. It is now a fixed and firm habit, and I am a mere slave in its power. I have long lost the good place I had, and had managed to hold some time ; but I have succeeded in getting another, though it is one of very small payment indeed. As long as it was quite necessary, I got a woman to nurse the baby, but I was very glad to get rid of that expense as soon as I could. And now the poor child has to be left in its cot all through the day, while I am at business ; and when I come home, I am, as you well know, little willing, or fit, to attend to it.'

"Since that time, whenever I do see my son sober, he is always very affectionate to me, and I love him very dearly. But nothing that I can say can induce him to leave off the drink. '*I would* do it, Mother,' he says to me, with tears in his eyes, '*I would* do it, Mother, if I *could* ; but I cannot.' I have made up my mind to take the child entirely ; for who knows, left as it used to be, what might have become of it ? My son might even have come home some night and killed it, for he is quite mad when he is in liquor. And every evening I come to this shop,—for it is here that he frequents,—and I wait for hours till he comes out : which he does—reeling, and either furious or stupified.

"Oh ! Sir, will you not try and save others from such guilt, and such a punishment as mine ?"

Soon after the poor woman had finished her story, I perceived that some person was about to come out of the gin-shop ; and I hoped that it was her son for whom she had so long waited. My wishes were in this respect attained. The swing-doors of the house went back to their fullest extent, and forth rolled a tall and handsome young man. He looked fiercely on all around him, and was ready, apparently, to quarrel with every one whom he might meet. An oath was on his lip, which longed to burst forth against the unoffending passenger. He staggered over the carriage-way, and would have fallen against the front of a shop opposite, had not a gentleman, crossing by, rescued him from the probable injury, and the glass from cer-

tain destruction. The drunkard was desirous to fight the gentleman, whom, in his state of inebriety, he imagined to have been the aggressor. I hastened across, to put an end to the dispute which was commencing—but I laboured in vain. The intoxicated man paid no regard to my efforts and entreaties. His Mother hurried to her son as he had elevated his fist to strike his fancied enemy, and gently laid her hand upon his arm, and asked him to go home. At the sound of his Mother's voice, the young man,—hardened as he was in his favourite vice, and while the curse was yet in his mouth—softened.—

"Mother, is that you?" said he, "you're not tired of waiting, then?"

"Ah! my boy," she answered him, "I would give the world that you would leave off this life of yours."

"I would leave it off, Mother," he protested, "you know I would, if I could.—I've been fighting with it now, but it conquers me always.—But who are you?" turning sharply towards me, "and what do you want staring here?"

"He is a gentleman who has been kind to me, my boy."

"Kind to you—then I'll go through fire and water for him!"

"Come home, my child," interrupted the poor woman, ashamed at once of his vehemence and his weakness.

"Mother I'm drunk, I know it, I can scarce keep my body up: but to serve one who's served you, I could climb up the highest hill you ever saw, and stand upon the very top of the Monument."

So saying, he stretched out his hand to me, and gave me one of the heartiest shakes I ever felt;—additionally hearty, because he was almost unconscious of what he was doing.

"Let me walk home with you," said I.

"Oh, don't trouble yourself about that, Sir; my old Mother will get me there all right enough."

"I don't doubt that, but however, let me walk with you:" and I accompanied them to his lodgings. Reader, if you fancy a prim, stiff, pragmatical gentleman, walking between a drunken man, and a woman with a crying baby; the idea may make you laugh. I therefore pray you not to let such a thought cross your mind.

Imagine to yourself if you will, a quaint, pedantic puritan; but remember to think of him as securing a fellow-man from injury, and aiding an aged person,—a woman—a Mother, and that, too, in her efforts for her child's welfare;—and I feel assured that the ludicrousness of the picture will vanish away.

We arrived, after some time, at the abode of the drunkard. We all went in, but there was little to gratify the eye upon entering. The unfortunate occupant began to give me a mock welcome, when the woman interfered.

"Go away, Sir, if you please," said she to me, "go away for to-night; and if you wish to talk with him, come to-morrow."

On the morrow I sought his lodgings, and how altered did I find his whole demeanour. We had a very long conversation: in the course of which I told him that I knew a friend of mine was in want of a workman in the business which he followed, and that if I found he got the better of the vice to which he was now addicted, I would recommend him to fill the situation. "In that office," said I, "you will get liberal wages; your child can then be properly brought up, and your mother made comfortable."

"Alas! Sir," he answered, "I'm not worthy of what I now get, and what I get is of no use to my family."

"But would you not wish to make an effort to do more than confess and lament this?" I asked.

.

HE IS NOW A SOBER AND UPRIGHT MAN!

I pass from a subject which has detained the attention of my Reader for so long a time, only expressing my hope that the matter has not been wearisome to him.

The day after I placed the young man whom I have been describing, in the employment of a commercial friend, I looked about for some other especial object for my sympathy and care.

Alas! the haunts of sorrow are so numerous, and the miserable are so large a majority of the population, that the difficulty was, to select one locality, or one class, amongst the many.

However, I resolved that I would start upon my pilgrimage, and that I would leave, as it were, to chance, the result of my wanderings. I sallied out, and walked for a considerable time without finding aught to fix my determination. There were carriages and horses enough—gay-looking people in abundance, elegant shops and noble streets, but none of these were subjects of interest; at least of that sort of interest with which I was then desirous to be inspired.

As I proceeded, my thoughts were for a period drawn away from the poor and the sickly, to a man who strutted in front of me. He was one of clean white stockings and gold-headed cane, proud of his gilt band, and elevated at his well adorned coat. I was forced to laugh; albeit, it is not my wont to ridicule my-fellow creatures, however singular may be their appearance or conduct; but I certainly did laugh at this man's extreme conceit. I enquired of myself, (for I lacked amusement,) whither he was directing his course. At one time, I presumed that he was on his way to his lady-love, who probably was shaking little Miss Amelia Sophia very violently, because she had rumpled her frock, or, because Mr. John

before me delayed his expected coming. And then I quickly changed my opinion, and fancied that John was on his way to some distinguished linen-draper's, to escort his "double refined" Mistress from the scene of her varied and tasteful purchases. To walk behind her, and secure her the respect of her fellow-passengers by his powdered wig and large knee buckles.

Great was my astonishment, after such suppositions had been in my mind, to find John turn down a narrow court. I followed him, for the route suited me well, and I felt curious why he should seek out such a mean place for his peregrinations.

I soon perceived that the old women and ragged children who were lounging about, claimed his acquaintance very reverentially, as he pursued his journey. It was a sight most gratifying to me, for I at once concluded that he was an almoner, now engaged on the delightful errand of carrying comfort and support to the dark homes of the sad and the starving. He strutted most pompously amongst the woe-begone, as he bore the gifts which his generous mistress had committed to his care.

He stepped along, rejoicing that he was in honour and in office. Yet it might be, that,—like those who surrounded him,—the natural friends and proper compeers of this fat and splendid personage,—his own relatives,—were but half-fed and half-clad. How comes he then to be so joyous? Laughs he that he is better off than they?

After we had been over some considerable ground, he stopped and drew from his pocket a very brilliant memorandum case, which he inspected very leisurely, turning over the leaves as well as his white gloves allowed him. He was looking out the name and address of the person to whom that day's bounty was to be borne. Having ascertained the full particulars, he arranged his curls very carefully, pulled up his capacious collars, and was about to knock with his hand against the door of one of the miserable houses. His notice however, was quickly arrested by the sight of a carriage turning down the wretched court. "Halloo," he exclaimed, "well! what will things come to at last!—A carriage coming down here! Can carriage people be coming themselves to such a place!" But it soon became evident that the vehicle did not intend to *pause* in so sad a locality. "Oh! I know what it means now," said John, to himself, but aloud, "they have got the thoroughfare up to lay down fresh pipes for the gas, and they're *obliged* to come down this line. Oh, that's all natural enough. I thought it was very droll." John's conjecture was correct. No doubt the rich gentleman in the carriage considered it proper that some brighter light should be thrown over the path along which he was in the habit of travelling; but perhaps he never gave a sigh to those who are always in darkness, and often in despondency. John knocked at the door to which his footsteps had been bent—at

THE HOVEL OF THE POOR BLIND!

There was a low sound of an old man's voice; and, as I was close behind, I could hear it, though it was faint and feeble.

"Come in, Sir," it said, "Come in, Sir," and there was a peculiar emphasis upon the word, "Sir," to mark out the high respect entertained for the worthy and dignified visitor. Well he knew that it was John—and that John must be made much of, lest he should represent "the old person to be very dogged, and little better than an impostor."

"Come in, Sir," said the voice from within.

"But how can I come in, Sir," said John, angrily, "while you keep the door firm?"

"The door is not fastened, Sir," replied the owner of the tottering tenement.

"I tell you, Sir," answered the displeased footman, "I tell you that it is, and it's no use your arguing about it."

"I don't wish to argue, Sir, I'm sure, but if you'll push against it, you'll find that it has only stuck."

"I *have* pushed and shoved with all my might and strength, and it won't move an inch."

"I'll try what I can do," said the pauper.

I heard a foot within, as if some one were groping about, after that which had been the subject of conversation. "Strange!" thought I, "for it's light and fine enough."

The old man gained the door. "I beg ten thousand pardons," said he. "I quite forgot I'd placed my crutch to lean against the door, for it won't



keep shut, and the stick was the only thing I had to set against it." The crutch was removed, the door flew open, and an old man, blind and infirm, stood before John and me.

"Here, my Mistress has sent you this shilling,—what do you think of that, old fellow?"

"I'm sure the lady's very, very kind to me, and I can't be grateful enough to her, and to you, Sir."—

"Ah! you're just right to say *me*, as well as *her*,—for I have plenty of walking about to do, carrying Mistress's gifts to the poor people; it's no joke I can assure you."

"I feel your kindness, Sir, and I hope I always shall."

John smiled complacently, and drew up his capacious collars.

"Will you not come in, and sit down, Sir?" enquired the blind man.

"Thank you," answered John, "I don't care if I do, for I'm tired out."

At this moment John noticed me, and with that blandness which marks some of these men towards gentlemen, he smiled, and asked if I wished to speak to the blind man.

"I will come in," I replied, "but do not let me disturb you; if you will transact your business, I will sit down and wait till it is over."

"Thank you, Sir," said he,—and we walked in together.

The blind man had withdrawn into the room, when John began to address me, as he supposed John was conversing with a friend.

It was a miserable apartment into which we entered; there was but one solitary chair, and the little window was broken.

"Be seated, Sir," said the blind man, "or gentlemen; is it *gentlemen*?"

"It is" said John, smiling blandly at the term, "it is."

The old man began to feel about the room for the chair to hand it to John, but he interposed.

"Never mind, old fellow, the chair is just by the stranger who has come in, and I will sit upon the table."

So saying he threw himself at his full length upon the table, surveyed his leg with great apparent satisfaction, and twisted, or endeavoured to twist the stiff bow of his cravat into a more elegant form.

"Well, how are you?—for Mistress told me to ask,—so I must do it to please her," said John.

"I'm very much obliged, Sir, to Mrs. Trevelyan—I'm not very well—I've been complaining the last few days very much."

"Ah! you're never satisfied; you kind of people never are. I'm sure I go to half a dozen pensioners every fortnight, and they never speak well of themselves; yet, I'm snre, they get money enough together, out of my Mistress—a shilling each, every fortnight!"—

"That's a great deal of money, Sir," said the blind man, "it is a *great* deal."

"Why, I wonder, when Mistress has such a deal to do with her money, what with theatres, operas and concerts, and dinner-parties, and routs, that she can spare anything for the poor."

"Ah! she has a charitable heart, that's it, Sir!"

"And this," mused I to myself, "is Charity! Three shillings a week to the poor, and three guineas a day to the world's pleasure. If we judged correctly of the value of things; if we thought truly of the sums of money we throw away on vain and unsatisfying trifles, whilst the starving are craving for bread, how differently should we look on the present objects of our admiration. The mighty temples of Melpomene and Thalia might then appear as adorned tombs, with imperishable treasures buried and crushed beneath; and angels above them—weeping!"

"I'm rested a little now," said John—for he did not feel himself quite at his ease whilst another person was listening to all his remarks addressed to the aged Blind. "Don't mind moving to open the door," continued John, "it's no consequence about that."

"Oh yes, Sir, I could not think of giving you the trouble!" and the sightless cripple began endeavouring to feel, with his outstretched hands, for the unsteady door. John willingly allowed it; for it was a pleasant and right joyous thing that some one should be found to do the honours for him which his profession usually called upon him to perform for others. The blind man at length found the door, and, opening it very wide, bowed very deferentially. John nodded, lisped out "Good bye, old chap," and sauntered out.

The pauper listened for a second step, and was evidently astonished that no other followed that of the footman. He moved his head from side to side in mute amazement.

"I wish to speak a few words with you," I began.

"Mr. John, who came with you, Sir, is gone; did you not see him go out?"

"He did not come with me, my friend; we arrived at your house at the same time, and I have waited for him to end his conversation; but I never saw him before to-day, to my knowledge."

"Thank you, Sir, for coming at all, but what can you wish to say to a poor old fellow like me; nobody ever comes but Mr. John, and he would never come if his Mistress did not send him."

"I noticed that your window was broken, letting in the cold North wind, and that your house was a very wretched one, and that you were blind and lame; and I felt anxious to ask you about your condition."

"Bless you, Sir; but I wonder you should think of that—for that's the very cause that no one, scarce, wants ever to speak to me, or to hear anything about me; they see I'm poor, and blind, and useless; and that's enough!"

"How do you manage to support yourself, since there is only one person that ever comes to your assistance?"

"I go out to beg for alms, Sir; that's the only way that one blind, and lame, and old as I am, can live, and it's a bad way enough too, Sir. I do bring back a little at night, sometimes, and that carries me on for three or four days."

"How do you contrive to get about, as you cannot see your way?"

"Oh! I knock with my stick all along the pavement, and I stand still at the crossing till some child comes up to help me over, and save me from the carriages and horses."

"And when you get home at night, have you nobody to see that things are made a little comfortable for you?"

"Oh! no, Sir, no! but I can grope about, I can feel for the lucifer-box and the shavings, and, sometimes, when I am lucky, for the pieces of wood; for now and then I stumble over something in the street, and find afterwards that it is a piece of wood. I can feel, too, for the bread, when there is any, and then I can feel my way up stairs, and into my bed, which is placed in the corner. I know that corner, for it is the one where the least rain comes in upon me."

"You must find it very awkward to tell where the stairs are; to creep up them to your sleeping-room?"

"Oh! no, Sir, that is easy enough; I know the narrow staircase well, with the broken steps; and there is a place to hold by, for the *blind* to climb up by, though it's broken away in parts."

"You ought to find persons ready to assist you, I should think; for all hearts must soften at the idea of the blind and poor."

"They do not do so now, Sir, and I can tell you why it is. There are some three or four men who have lost their sight, and have nothing to support themselves by; they wish to call the notice of passengers (who otherwise might not observe them), to their sad fate, for it is a sad one, Sir, and so they keep crossing from one side to the other, that people may say, 'those blind men will get run over if they don't take more care.' Perhaps, Sir, this is not correct, and it is a kind of imposition to pretend they want to cross, when they do not need to do so. Still, Sir, there is the blindness to be thought of; and that they *might* be run over in their way, if others did not help them. But however that may be, people now suppose that if one wishes to impose, all wish to impose. And if a poor blind creature, now, like myself, is obliged to cross over, on his round to beg for alms, not a soul offers to help him. 'Oh! he's doing it on purpose,' they say, and they all draw back, and let the poor Blind run the risk of being trodden under foot of the horses, or crushed by the carriages, for fear he is crossing to draw public attention to himself. I don't think, Sir, they ever say to themselves, 'perhaps he really needs to cross, and may get killed;' which is what you'd think they would say, when the chance is between that, and

being expected to give some halfpence ; but they all think that p'r'aps he may be doing it on purpose, and so they let him risk his life upon that chance. Yet, Sir, an innocent man may be killed if they don't help him ; and at the worst, if they do help one of the other sort, he can but be looking for a copper, which they can always refuse to give him if they like, without a fear of his being able to see to follow them."

"You must find your constant walks dull and tiresome," I remarked.

"I do, Sir," he answered me, "I am like a heavy dull winter sun going his daily rounds, without getting any brighter himself, or serving to cheer up any thing as he passes."

"Were you born blind?"

"Oh! no, Sir; when I was a child I had famous sight. I could equal any boy in the whole village in that respect; all my relations had famous long and strong sight."

"Did you lose your sight by small-pox, as is so frequently the case?"

"No, Sir, I got over that disease very well; my Parents took great care of me, watching me all the time, and I weathered it very well. They had a great fear that it *might* destroy my vision, and they did all they could that it should not do so."

"Then, how did this great misfortune come upon you?"

"Why, I'll tell you, Sir.—You see when I was a young man, I got work in a foundry, and I was some years with my employers, and gave them great satisfaction. My business was to sit close to a raging furnace and work there, looking hard at the fire all the time to see that it did not get the least bit dimmer or smaller. I used to hate that blaze, and wish that I had had to work in a dark pit, hundreds of feet under ground, rather than to have my eye-balls scorched with that furnace. Well, so it went on for some time, and I used to wish that I could any how shut out that fire from my sight. But after a period, Sir, I began to think it did not shine as bright to me as it used to do, and that it must be my eyes that dimmed, for I loaded the fire with fuel.—And so it was.—And after a further time I was *sure* that it was my eyes that deceived me, for the more the fire raged from the quantity it was fed with, the less did I see of its light. And when a year had passed from the time of my sight first growing bad, I had difficulty to see at all. I had to strain my eyes to see the mighty fire, which twelve months before had pained my sight to look upon; at length I found all a blank. I might stare ever so hard, but nothing could I make out; all was night with me, and a night which was to know no morning. I spoke with the doctor about it, and of course he said that it was the fire that had blinded me, and that the case was one which no person living could be of the least good to; so I was forced, for want of sight, to throw up my employment, and had now no means to earn anything to get food or covering. My former masters spoke about it to me, and told me how sorry they were for my ill-luck, and that they wished me well, though, of

course, I could never be any more use to them. But they told me that if I could put them in the way of doing something for me, they would be quite ready to do it. But I knew of nothing, for that fire had rendered me fit for nothing. And one of the gentlemen gave me a sovereign, and told me another man who had been highly recommended to him, had got my situation; and to end my story, here I am, in darkness and destitution."

I had no longer any need for doubtful consideration whither to direct my steps to find woe depicted in its gloomiest colours: my visit to the "poor Blind" decided me as to where I could meet distress, in,—if I may use such a term,—in its very perfection. That night I went to my couch weary with the fatigue of the various matters which had occupied my time and attention; and I fell into a deep and tranquil sleep. Happy dreams came across me. At one period I fancied myself meeting friends from whom I had long been separated;—at another, my thoughts were making pleasant excursions among green fields and flowery hedges, and pastures beside still waters. In the midst of one of the sweetest and most joyous of these delusions, I imagined I heard some loud and sudden noise. I started up in bed. "Pshaw!" said I to myself, "it is a dream;" and I closed my eyes, and placed my tired head once more upon the pillow. A louder sound, however, soon convinced me that it was no dream which had thus startled and troubled me. Voices were calling at their highest pitch, and vehicles of some heavy description were rattling past in quick succession. I jumped up and ran to the window. Persons of all ages, and of both sexes, were rushing down the street, screaming the word,—the dreadful word, "Fire!"

I have now to narrate,

THE TALE OF AN AWFUL FIRE!

Engines were going along as fast as the overdriven horses could carry them. I looked in the direction in which the multitude sped so eagerly, and the heavens were one brilliant blaze of light! Who can look upon such a sky, and then seek his bed again, and fall asleep forgetful of the misery which others, without a doubt, are enduring? If such a person can be found, he is unworthy of the quiet couch, and the still chamber, and the dream of gentle kindness, or unchanging friendship. I dressed myself in haste, and mingled with the throng. Earnest and anxious were the questionings one of another. "Where can it be?" each asked his companion, and many bethought them of some spot in which they secretly hoped it would prove not to be. But all the while there were many laughing and singing, jesting and bawling, as if they were hastening to a theatre or a race-course. On and on we tore—down one street and up another, tracing our way by the engine's thundering career; and, still more clearly, by the unslackened fire, which blazed upwards like some fearful volcano. Children were thrown down, and for aught the crowd knew, they might be trampled upon, but the

CHRONICLES OF THE CAREWORN.

crowd paused not; the screams of women were shrill and frequent, but the men had no time to listen to them. All feelings else seemed lost in the desire to reach the splendid, but terrible scene before us. As we proceeded on our way towards Tottenham-court-road, the flame seemed brighter and brighter, and we unanimously agreed that many houses in that great thoroughfare must be falling a prey to the devouring element. But we found that such was not strictly the fact; the fire was raging in one of those small and miserable streets which turn out of that place, and which are the more wretched the nearer they approach to the end at which there is a junction with Oxford-street. As I got to the corner of the alley which was being destroyed, (for it deserved no better name than alley,) the crowd was frightfully dense; it was like a thick cloud, from which the noise of thunder issued in shoutings which rose to the skies, whenever the wind, meeting the blaze, was seen to spread it around with awful violence. I was determined to get to the agonized inhabitants of the burning tenements; but it was a difficult matter to accomplish; after various efforts, however, I at length succeeded in forcing my way, and fearful indeed was the sight which then met my eye! The appearance of the houses, standing out, as they did, in the bright light of the fire, contrasted painfully with that which usually marks those of so sad a locality, from which the smoke generally comes heavily and slowly, as if showing how very little of warmth or cheerfulness was to be found within. The poor, indeed, know of fire, but it is as of a small and quiet thing. It is with them synonymous with a few wood shavings gathered from the pathway, and lighted up by a borrowed match. It is a sort of friend,—albeit a very gloomy one,—but now it was an impetuous enemy, rejoicing in its very fierceness, and exulting in its unchecked and victorious career.

Poor people, whom one might have supposed would have a fellow-feeling with the wretched sufferers, were apparently happy at the stir and confusion, and were shouting in loud and gladsome tones. I was tempted at first to think them very callous and cruel, thus to delight in the woes of their brethren, and laugh at the distresses of their companions. Further consideration led me to the belief that it was from no ill feeling the poor seemed thus elated at such a period, for I conceived that their satisfaction arose merely from the excitement of the light and noise; because pleasure's own still and quiet voice—the voice of household comfort, or domestic sweetness; of pious meditation, or of holy hope,—never sounded in their ears. They had but one idea of life, and that was in uproar—but one conception of gaiety, and that was in splendour. And I felt that I must needs pity those who rejoiced, as well as those who mourned; inasmuch as such rejoicing was engendered by their worst misfortunes.

I dare say that those of my Readers who have attended the theatres of the great metropolis, or those of our large country towns, have taken notice of the people who fill the upper and lower galleries, and observed

their extreme merriment and boisterous laughter; perhaps they have thought "how pleasant must the great light and bustle be to those who are accustomed to dark and silent rooms." But alas! I sorrow to think that in their every-day life the recollection of the lamps and the music, may flash across the minds of such, only to make their gloom seem a thousand times more gloomy;—that the music may echo in their ears, but to remind them that from them the voice of melody has passed away! They have had proof that ladies and gentlemen are willing to spend pounds on their own amusements; and that while, amid the glare of lamps, they witness some favourite comedy, they forget how many a real tragedy is acting without one faint candle burning in the dim chamber!—The row of houses of which I was speaking, was quickly falling a prey to the flames. I wondered how the fire could have originated there;—"perhaps," said I to myself, "it has slumbered ever since the houses were first built, when the labourers had the shavings put together and kindled, to make the pot boil for their pleasant repast, or to get a warm cup of tea to take with the more substantial remembrance, which their careful wives had sent them."

I presently heard loud and agonizing screams from the assembled women. "The front of that house opposite will be soon in. Don't you see how it's falling forwards? And all the people are in it!" All eyes soon became fixed upon the doomed spot, and too evident was it that the terrible apprehensions just uttered, were certain to be realized. A few moments more, and the work was accomplished. The upper part of the frontage of the wretched building, was precipitated into the street, immediately after the firemen and the police had succeeded in keeping the mob sufficiently back to prevent accidents from the descending rubbish. After the smoke which was occasioned by the crush had cleared away, a scene presented itself which it is both difficult and painful to depict. That such is no imaginary horror, the dread which overpowers my mind whenever I revert to the subject, abundantly testifies to myself. Truth is said to be stranger than fiction, and certainly it is often far more appalling.

The fire, it seems, had commenced in the highest story but one, in this house, and had burnt upwards with tremendous rapidity. It originated, at least it was so surmised, with a poor girl who gained her bread by working with a milliner in extensive business. Her room, as well as that contiguous to it, now became open to the public gaze, by the falling of the frontage. There had been two rooms above these, but one of them, at the time of which I speak, was gone entirely. There seems to be an ambitious nature in fire which nothing can crush or tame. It is ever for ascending far above the place from which it rose; and, like unto many others among the ardent and aspiring, it cares little that the lives of mortals, and the toilsome labours of honest industry, fall victims to its glories.

Fancy then the interior of the three rooms laid bare before the eye of all;

two, side by side ; and one above ; and then let me call your particular attention to the apartment of the unhappy girl. She, poor, pale, and delicate creature, was sleeping soundly, although the shouts of the people, and the noise of the continually arriving engines, were terrible to other ears.

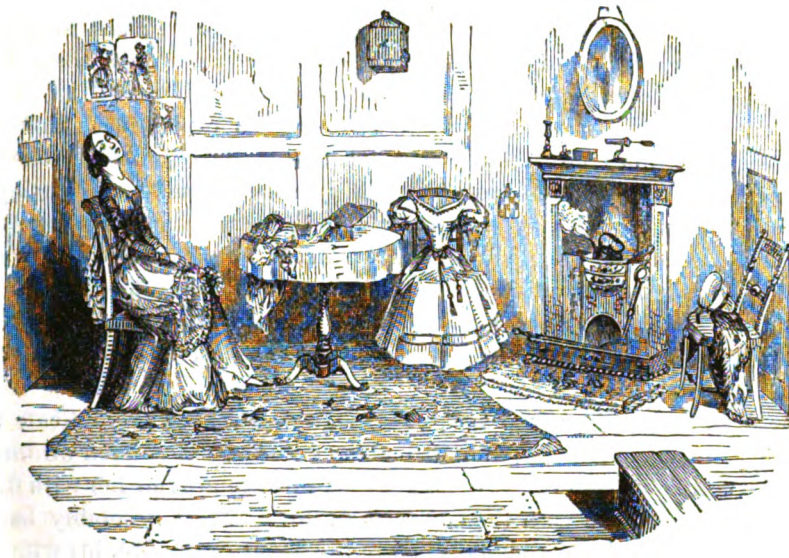
She was very neatly dressed ; for, in order to hold her badly-paid situation, such gentility of attire as took away much of her scanty earnings, was absolutely required. She had been compelled on coming home, to betake herself to her needle on her own account, after she had been working all day long at her mistress's ; from early dawn to late night, for a sum but just sufficient to prolong a life which was one of habitual drudgery. For three or four hours only, was this delicate girl of sixteen allowed to sleep ; and even during that period she trembled in her dreams, lest the interval of repose should slip away too quickly, and she should fail to be at her employer's house by the appointed time. At an age when Parents in the wealthier classes watch with tender solicitude over the opening beauties of the darlings whom Heaven has granted to them, this poor child was obliged "to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness."

Upon this sad occasion, she had been detained very long at the milliner's, that certain dresses might be completed, which the ladies for whom they were intended would not be easy on the morrow until they saw ; that they might be assured there would be no impediment to their attending a ball to be given in Belgrave-square the coming evening. "The dresses *must* be home, (if you sit up all night to finish them,) for those were the Misses St. Clair's own words, and it would be a cruel and hard thing to disappoint them."

Dance gaily my beautiful country-women ! Sweet personifications of joy ! Who would have the heart to deprive you of your innocent amusements, and dim the lustre of your smile ? I would be the last person in the whole world to look with a severe eye upon any of your blameless pleasures ; but I should find infinitely more delight in your conversation during the mazes of the dance, if I could be assured that the lips which speak so softly and so harmoniously, and with such a winning gentleness, whilst addressing your partners, had not uttered the stern decree that preparations must be made for the occasion of a party, at the expense of the health and the life, (for so it is in the extent of the system,) of some of the same sweet and tender sex as yourselves ; born to merit, equally with yourselves, the best treatment that humanity can bestow, and created with powers as delicate, with nerves as sensitive, and with feelings as acute, as your own : albeit no silks and satins deck their fragile forms,—no gilded carriages wait to shelter them from the wintry blast,—and no attendant menials crowd to watch over their safety, and to do their bidding.

Who can wonder that the poor girl, the subject of my present sketch, wearied out by twenty hours work, had fallen asleep, or that that sleep was

of so dull and heavy a character, that not all the hideous uproar around her could move her from her slumber? The shouts from the bystanders were long and loud; but they were all in vain. She occasionally started, and then we began to rejoice in the hope that she was about to be restored to consciousness; but alas! no! The cry of death had not power to make her stir; nay, to her worn out mind such a cry would probably have brought no terror. She started at the image of the mistress who would upbraid her for the tardiness of her coming. She grew restless at the troubled dream which presented to her view the young ladies prevented from joining in the quadrille or the waltz, in consequence of her being too exhausted to fulfil their order. But she soon fell again into a heavy slumber.



Even in her every-day life, this poor, tired girl had been working her own winding-sheet: for scanty food, late hours, and hard labour, are sufficient to crush the vigour, and ruin the energy, even of blithesome sixteen. But more rapidly was her death now drawing nigh, and yet from the same sad causes; for intense fatigue had induced the death-like stupor which nothing could disturb. "Strange," said some strong man who was a spectator of this scene, "strange that a girl can sleep in that way, for I myself could not do so after I had partaken of very different fare to that which she is likely to get." It was *not* strange. For this strong man, in the maturity of his powers, had never worked as that thin, weak girl had toiled and striven for her daily bread; and therefore he had never

H

known what it was to be thus weighed down by, and crushed under, the burden of exertion.

The fire continued to spread. The people besought the firemen to ascend by a ladder, but they refused. "It was as much as their lives were worth. The house was about to fall, and it would bury them under the ruins, as well as the female they were trying to save."

One ornament—and one only—graced the poor girl's apartment: by her side was placed a common-looking bottle, which contained a flower—a solitary and blighted rose-bud.

Her dress now caught the flame, and all the little apparatus of her trade, helped to form, alas! with what a truthful emblem,—her funeral pile! It would be worse than useless to describe such a harrowing spectacle in detail. The element which had conquered brick and mortar, and triumphed over wood and iron, had but an easy task in mastering a small quantity of poor flesh and blood. The belles would have their finery; but she, whose repose was sacrificed for its manufacture, now entered on a sleep which could never be interrupted by the anxieties of a ball-room!

In the room adjoining that which I have been describing, stood a tall and jaded-looking man. There was but little furniture in his wretched apartment. He was one of those persons who try to make a living by obtaining "odd jobs," as they are denominated; for the uncertain state of his health rendered him unable to retain any fixed employment. It was his practice to wander about the streets, and offer to hold the horse of any gentleman desiring to make a call,—to get a conveyance for ladies when a sudden shower overtook them,—or to carry a parcel to any distance, for a few coppers.

His wife, formed in a frail and tender mould, had been too delicate to do anything for her livelihood, and had always entirely depended on him for support, and he had striven with his utmost power to provide her with the requirements, and even with the comforts of life. Most miserably had his exertions failed. Some few days before the event of the fire, his wife died. And he was left to think that he should have reflected ere he married her; that he should have considered how far it was justifiable to take so weakly and fragile a being to share a lot so rough and precarious as his own. She died, and life had for him no charms. His whole pleasure since her death had been to sit where she had been accustomed to sit; to rest his head where she had rested hers when pain and sickness made it throb and beat; to fix his eyes upon anything on which she had gazed, and chiefly on one trunk, which had ever been dear to her because she had brought it from her Parents' home. Who that has never loved, could think that sights so humble and so homely could have aught to interest a manly mind? Who that *has* loved, will doubt the possibility of their being objects of tender and absorbing regard? This widower,—bereaved, as he had been, of the one person on earth for whom he cared,—needed no

shoutings to rouse him from his slumbers—sleep, with her leaden pinions, had not rested on his eyelids for many a troubled night. We beheld him by the bright light of the fire even more clearly than we could have done at noonday; and thus plainly also did he behold us. Great was the anxiety of the multitude that he should escape the death which appeared to await him, and earnest were the cries to him to try to do so ere it was too late.—He scarcely seemed to hear them, so entirely was his mind absorbed. His head hung down dejectedly, and he used no efforts for his safety. The people again addressed him at the pitch of their voices. At length he heeded them, and advanced to the very front of the room, when the spectators joyfully pointed out to him that he might yet, perhaps, preserve his life by getting on the adjoining house. He shook his head in a decided manner, and returned to the very spot where he had recently been sitting, “The man is mad,” was the universal murmur, “he will not leave that room, and it will soon be a prey to the flames.”

“Will it?” said the occupant of the doomed apartment.—“It will *not* fall—do not say that it will fall—I will stay by it to the last—I do not care for the heat;—*She* bore cold, miserable cold here, for my sake; and she never quitted this place; so you see I cannot go.”

Loud were the assurances to him that “it was madness to remain there,—that the room could not hold out many moments against the fire, and that if he tarried his own life would inevitably be destroyed, without the slightest benefit accruing to any person from the sacrifice.”

“I do not care for my life—it is of no value,” he replied, and he threw himself in dejection upon the floor.

“Don’t stop,” shouted the mob—“don’t stop for anything that you may have to lose—but look to your life.”—A sudden thought appeared to sieze the mind of the unhappy man.

“Thank you,” said he, “for the remembrance, this must not be burned,” and so saying he caught up the favourite box from its accustomed corner, and endeavoured to climb out, encumbered with the heavy weight.

The contempt of the populace knew no bounds. “He is a miser—a pitiful miser; he cares more for his gold than for himself.”—The man heeded them not.—

“Put down your box, though it be full of sovereigns,, and save *yourself*.”—

The widowed husband turned towards the street, and opened the trunk;—it was empty.

“It came from *her* home in the country,” he exclaimed; “upon the wedding day she brought it here. It was full of things then, but she parted with them all for the love of me.—Shall I let the box be burned?—When she used to look so smiling on me that one would have thought she did not know of her losses and privations. I have seen the tears fill her eyes when she glanced at that trunk, for the sake of the dear place it

came from : and I've seen her kiss it too, for the love of home.—Can I let it be burned?" The hastening flames reached higher and higher ;—they approached the very spot upon which he stood.—“Save *this!* Save this! he screamed—threw the box forward toward the assembled crowd, and fell himself into the mass of raging fire which blazed around him.

But it was in the room above his, we witnessed the scene most exquisitely touching;—beautiful, even in the midst of its horrors. Three little children were huddled together in a corner, their small arms around each other's neck,—hugging one another still closer as the fire came nearer to them, and mingling their sobs and tears in tender unison. It was in vain to exhort *them* to seek their escape :—fear had completely paralysed them, and rendered them incapable of any effort. Ever and anon they looked on the frightful element which surrounded them, and then they called upon their Parents to protect them from its fury.

They had never known a want which those fond Friends had not striven at least, to relieve ; and they could think of no other means of safety than to cry out on them.

We read in the Word of Truth, of the three men of old who remained unhurt in the burning fiery furnace, because innocence was found in them—for the same reason, one might have fancied that these tender babes would continue unscathed by the blaze or the ruins. The eldest of the three was a thin and fair-haired girl, upon whom her Father had lavished all the care his circumstances would permit. He could do little for her perhaps, but that little was ever done. She had been in his mind at all seasons, and at all hours ; and he had longed to live to behold her in the loveliness of womanhood, and to see her the universal favourite he was sure she would deserve to be. Near her was a boy—a bold intrepid boy had he ever been heretofore, but now his courage failed him, and “Save me, sister,” was his faltering, and, alas ! most unavailing, cry. The third child was of a laughing and sportive character,—stamped with the marks of happiness ; the darling of all hearts, the charmer of long wintry hours. She wondered why “the naughty fire” would come nearer and nearer, when she begged it to go away. Even now she looked for some knee upon which to climb—for some mouth that would give her the accustomed kiss—for some hand that would withdraw her from the threatening danger.

The pet of the family, and of all who knew her, was about to meet an agonizing and terrible death.

They would not have needed—the sweet ones !—to plead for help from the bystanders, but the moment to save them was passed. The ladder which it was attempted to place against the house, fell with the crumbling building. They hung about one another, and hid their eyes, resting their heads upon each other's shoulder. They had yet

strength enough left to remember their Father and their Mother, and to weep at the remembrance, but their strength went no further. Nurtured and fondled on a Parent's lap, what idea had they till now of pain and death?

Who shall attempt to paint the misery of a man who stood amidst the crowd beneath?

The Father of these children! He threw his glance one moment at his little ones, and the next instant to the clear heaven above him. He knew it was useless to seek to save them, for he had already tried to do so a dozen times,—in vain. He had climbed up part of the way towards the spot on which his eyes were riveted, and had fallen to the earth, cut and bleeding,—he had scaled a ladder to reach them, and had returned—on fire, and in agony. He paced the street in hopeless anguish. He called often and often upon his wife, to forgive him for having, in the first startled consciousness of the fire, rushed into the open air, thus leaving his sleeping babes behind him. His wife was in the country with her friends, and the thought of what she would have to hear, and from him—made him almost mad; as his frantic gestures and shrieks well nigh made him seem.

It had been suggested that a bed from the lower part of that house, or from some of the adjacent dwellings, should be brought, upon which the children might throw themselves, and the poor things were even called upon to mind and jump upon this bed, so soon as it was placed below their window: the little ones comprehending what they were to do, and preparing to fulfil the directions thus given to them. The Father's heart beat high with joyful hope; he feared that his darlings would not be uninjured, but he trusted that their lives would, by this means, be preserved; and that seemed everything to him now. Alas! neither in that house, nor in any one sufficiently at hand, could there be found anything on which the hapless children might spring. Most of the lodgers in that wretched locality, slept every night upon the bare floor. The children might yet have been saved, had one of their wretched neighbours had a bed on which to rest his wearied limbs at night!

As it was, the building was soon a mass of smouldering ruins, and the sole hopes of a Father's heart were laid beneath the embers. When the children fell, their little arms were still twined around each other's neck.

• • • • •

Here let me pause, and bear my testimony, feeble though it be, to the genuine friendliness, and kind-heartedness of the poor. If a misfortune light upon one of the humblest class, his neighbours are ever ready to offer to him the cup of consolation, and to improve, to the best of their power, his melancholy lot. It is their custom to share with the beggar, (even as did good King Alfred of old,) the single remaining loaf;—it is their wont to sit by the bed-side of sickness and death, although they themselves, it

may be, are very faint and weary ;—it is their habit to give to their friends from innate generosity, without a hope of recompense.

The virtues of the rich are well known to all men—albeit they may not desire them to be so ; for I am sure that many of the wealthy seek concealment in their charities, and wish their benevolence to be “born to blush unseen ;”—but yet, their sympathy is talked of in the world, and the public tongue is busy in proclaiming it. But with the poor it is far otherwise. Who knows, or takes account of, the nightly-watches kept at the couch of a dying pauper, by one attracted to him only by his sufferings ; one as distressed and despised, as he whom she gratuitously attends ?

Who thinks anything of one shivering woman taking off the thin shawl which is wrapped round her attenuated body, to place it over the shoulders of the baby of another ? Who appreciates the charity of a girl, who, after having been all day selling flowers, or matches, about the streets, will take the trouble, forgetful of the fatigue, of running a long distance, to procure a medical man for an acquaintance who requires him ? All these things escape the observation and the regard of the world,—it knows not of them,—they are hidden from the common gaze,—concealed amidst the darkness which o’ershadows the dwelling-places of the lowly. Yet assuredly, there is an Eye that beholds, and beholds with approval, these sacrifices of health, time, and property. (Strange word,—but yet correct one ; for the poor widow of whom we read, cast into the treasury larger wealth than the most affluent Pharisee.) When earthly honours have been crushed like the frail moth, and earthly riches have mingled with their kindred dust, these unobtrusive virtues will shine as stars which rise to set no more.

To have erected the pyramids of Egypt, will avail nothing to Cheops ;—to have conquered worlds, and wept for fresh worlds to conquer, will be useless to “him of Macedon ;”—to have gathered the brightest treasures this earth has to offer, will be esteemed as vanity ;—but to have sat by the beggar’s hard couch,—to have hastened to bring him the aid he needed,—to have shared a little gruel with a craving and houseless outcast, will be recorded with praise before assembled thousands of kings, nobles, and statesmen ; and will be the subject of angelic rejoicing with those benignant spirits who delight in the welfare of man.

I fear I have wandered far from my narrative, for which I crave my reader’s pardon, but I have been induced thus to digress, by my recollection of the ready and zealous exertions of the poor people, belonging to the street which was the scene of the fire I have described,—to do all that their little means would allow, to make those who had been “burned out,” as comfortable as they could possibly be under such circumstances. Garments, (thin and threadbare it may be, but the best they had,) were tendered to those who had to escape with but little of their own to shelter them. Doors were willingly thrown open for the reception of the sufferers

and kind and pitying words were lavished by the wretched upon these now one degree more miserable than themselves.

The fire which had destroyed their humble home, seemed to have raised them up, with magic power, many another, into which they might enter as freely as if they were indeed its rightful owners. For some, alas! whose woes had that night been keenly felt, nothing could now be done;—but there was one sad relic of the ruins, claiming, though all-uncaring for, the deepest sympathy. A broken-hearted man. The people feared to speak to him, apprehending that he would turn away from them in his desperate grief. Far otherwise;—quietly and gently did he go, or rather did he permit himself to be led, to the house of a neighbour. He uttered no complaint,—he went as a little child;—for those whom he had lost were in his thoughts, and, thinking but of them, he tacitly followed their example; doing as they had been used to do, acting as they had been wont to act, speaking as once they spoke. I was convinced the bereaved Father would be easier in the society of his equals, than in that of one somewhat above him, and I quitted the melancholy scene. On returning to my house, I threw myself upon my bed, worn in body and mind, and endeavoured to fall asleep and forget,—since it was unavailing to remember,—the anguish I had beheld; and from exhaustion, I soon sank into a deep slumber, but ever and anon was I startled from my rest, to see before me imaginary flames, burning fiercely and unceasingly; to witness, in troubled fancy, some hapless milliner, toiling at her midnight labours amidst the raging element,—some widowed husband, whose thoughts, even there, could not be drawn away from his lost companion,—or some infants clasping each other in the twofold grasp of love and death.

It is a generally accepted notion, and I believe a true one, that if a man desire to seek out any especial object of his attention, if he wish to study landscape, or botany, or human character, he will find ample materials for his scrutinizing care. No man need depart unsatisfied, who applies himself to any intellectual, or moral pursuit. He who searches for the sorrowful, most assuredly forms no exception to this rule. Whether he tread the streets of a large city, or wander amid the calm scenery of some village hamlet, opportunities will be abundant for the accomplishment of his purpose.

I had had an engagement standing for many months previous to the date of my last narrative, to spend a short part of the Spring of 1842 with a kind and valued friend in the country. I longed for the green fields and the rural lanes, and anxiously looked forward to the day arranged for the commencement of my excursion.

My mind, nevertheless, was so occupied with the distresses of the poor, that I could not help mingling a sigh with my smile, at the idea of my travels, from the thought that I should have to cease for a season from studying their sorrows and necessities. I soon found, however, that the coun-

tenance of sadness is to be discerned as often in the rustic shades, as in the noontide of London, and that grief can make her resting-place, like Love in the fable, amidst the flowers and the shrubs ; that the man of woe is an occupant equally of the metropolitan, and the rustic, hovel, and that the voice of lamentation is often heard where there is none but echo to repeat, or listen to, her tones. And I also learned by experience, that a person who has given his mind for some time to one particular theme, whatever it may be, cannot forget it, even if he would ; but that it mingles in his fancy with every object he looks upon, and speaks for ever its own language in his ear.

I set out, on a delightful Spring morning, for the residence of my friend situated in one of the northern counties of England. I was in high spirits at the prospect of my journey, and in the hope of seeing one who was dear to me well and happy. I preferred to travel by coach than by railroad, from my yearning wish to see the blue skies, without a cloud of smoke,—to look upon a lovely prospect for something exceeding half a second,—and to hear the ploughboy's whistle, unchecked by the scream of the engine as it cleared its way like a noisy pioneer. I secured the back-seat, and as the four beautiful horses went off at a quiet trot, marking the time with their feet as accurately as if they had been dancing at an amphitheatre, and snorting for joy at their freedom to exercise their powerful limbs, I found myself in a state of perfect pleasure, of entire satisfaction with the present hour. Yet we were but a very few miles upon our way, when thoughts of the sad came mingling with feelings of the gladsome. Memories of old men with nothing to rest their limbs upon,—of husbands mourning over the wives of their bosoms, whom the death of poverty had snatched away from them,—and of children falling a prey to bitter cold and starvation, came now and again across me, and drew my attention away from hills and valleys, from flowers and trees, from glowing sunlight and delicious breezes. Moreover, a very small matter in the way—it might be a cottage, or a slip of ground enclosed,—even a paling or a gate would bring the same subject—the subject of the poor, before me, by a chain of recollections. Others might behold in all such mere inanimate and unimportant things ; to me they had each a tongue and a hand,—a tongue telling of the lowly man's necessities ; a hand pointing to the fate of the destitute and the dying.

The other passengers would have laughed at me had they known that such reflections had been engendered by a piece of wood or the trunk of a tree. An instance of this forcibly strikes me.—We were proceeding at a rapid pace over a very dull, tedious, and gloomy portion of our journey. There was little to attract the eye or the notice of ordinary spectators. In the midst of a barren heath there was placed one large stone, fixed in the ground, without an apparent motive for its being there ; yet I could not doubt that to some person it was

THE STONE OF MEMORIAL.

The other passengers, if they observed it at all, thought it was odd it should be there, and turned away to something else more worthy of their regard. But the peculiar bent and bias of my mind seized hold of this object, with which to build theories and speculations, all based upon the foundation of the wretched.

"I wonder," said I, addressing my nearest neighbour, "I wonder they do not get that stone upon the right hand side, removed from the place it now occupies."

"I don't know," he answered, "why they should take it away, or care about it—it's only a stone."

"That is just it," said I.—"It stands upon this great heath like a—like a stone; that is why I wonder they do not have it removed. If it stood like any thing else in the whole world—like a pillar, or a beacon, I should not be astonished that it remained; but it stands just like—A Stone. I marvel that they do not send the pauper children of the neighbourhood to come and knock it over. It would be employment for them, and tend to inure them to the hard work they will have to do hereafter; and three commissioners might be appointed, at handsome stipends, to see that the little ones did it,—without remuneration of any kind."

"Why!" said my companion, "you seem very amazed at seeing a stone here; what is there so strange in that? One often sees stones put in cities; why should they not be in the country also?"

"That is just it, my dear Sir,"—I answered him. "If it had been in a town I should have thought nothing about it, and hardly noticed it. It might then have been erected to mean any of a hundred things, too various for me to mention; for instance, it might have been erected to bear the initials of two adjoining parishes, in order that due information might thereby be given how to pass on from one to another, and ultimately through both of them—the starving mendicant who did not belong to either. Here is a legitimate object to be attained, and a valuable end to be answered."

"That would be a very poor and ignoble end," said my neighbour, interrupting me. "I cannot think so large a stone would be set up for such a purpose"

"Possibly not," I answered him. It might have been raised in triumph, to show that tens of thousands of brave and noble minded men were now laid low,—cold and immovable as the stone which we have looked upon."

"What *can* you mean?" enquired my friend.

"Of course," I replied, "I mean, to mark that a glorious battle had been gained by the force of British arms, and the might of British valour. This

is the same thing as I said before, only put into different words. Uninterested persons read it one way, and widows and orphans read it another."

"It might have been erected," exclaimed my acquaintance, somewhat enthusiastically, "to one single person; such is England's respect and regard for merit."

"Very true," said I, "as a fit memorial for one who distinguished himself in the senate, and raised the national glory, without regard to mercy and pity,—to the weaker feelings and warm sympathies of our nature—a stone would be a fitting memorial for *him*. But standing where it now does, in the midst of a bleak plain, it must have been raised by a poor man, and not by a rich and great one. And what in all the world, can a poor man have to put up a stone about? This is such a barren place, that one might well fancy it to be full of spirits of terror and desolation—fearful creatures that make the hair of the affrighted spectator rise with dismay, and his convulsed limbs totter beneath him. Spirits that cannot be hid behind the leafless trees, and stunted dried up shrubs. This is broad open daylight; yet here all things look dark. Everything appears still, and yet there is ever a small chilling movement. This is the very region—not of day, nor yet of repose—it is the very region of *Sleepless Night*. The whole place is so void of life, and so hard, that one could fancy the dust—the very dust, had been swept away by some mighty skeleton hand. No rain appears to have lighted upon the parched road, for many and many a long day. The windows of Heaven seem to have closed upon it, to mark the silent death that reigns triumphant. It has lately, indeed, been made a thoroughfare for carriages and coaches; but formerly it could not have been any thoroughfare whatever. He who elevated the stone must have thought when he did so, (for the coachman tells me he believes it has been here for years) that no one would approach it from choice; unless he came to die—wishing to be undiscovered in his last earthly scene, and knowing full well that no stray passenger would ever pause to look on anything, but flee, as fast as his strength would carry him, from so dismal a place. He alone might have been willing to come there who wished in an utter blank to obliterate the sad memories of the past.

"You seem at a loss," said my neighbour, "to imagine one individual who could have been induced to place that stone in the position which it now occupies."

"I am almost," I answered him, "but not altogether puzzled. I can think of two sorts of persons who might have erected the stone, even on this bleak and barren heath. I can think of two, although at first it appeared to me inconceivable why any human being should have placed it here."

The curiosity of my companion was now excited,—though had I not sat so near to him, he would, as he passed over the plain, have glanced upon the stone without one speculation as to its author, or his object. But I had

spoken so much about the matter, that his attention was aroused, and he begged me to inform him what two persons I contemplated.

"I can picture to myself a man full of honest and right feelings in his guileless breast—striving with manly independence, to gain his daily bread by daily toil—to earn his own living by strenuous and upright exertion. The bread of such a man is truly 'angels' food,' for he obeys the commands of his Creator, and lives. Such a man hath his blessings and his comforts, albeit the world seeth them not. He hath a blessing on every morsel he partaketh of, for the favour of Heaven accompanieth it. He hath a comfort in all his efforts, for those efforts are approved of by the Eternal. I conceive him seeking by his own life to dignify the Parents who had tenderly reared him;—wishing that he might, by his own bright light, throw a lustre over his Father and his Mother. Yes! such a man, if the fury of hot passions and malignant falsehood, ever turned against his Father's quiet dwelling-place, would be sufficient, in the single excellence of his own character, to bear, like the 'pious Æneas of old,' his Sire unscathed from the fire. I fancy this man possessing a quenchless thirst for Fame—a craving for Glory—an ardent aspiration after an undying name, a name unfading and immortal. (And let no person blame these sighs for honour, if sought in the path of purity and virtue; if its pursuer seek to make others happy in their several stations, and delight to make his Parents honoured through the medium of their child; if he leave an example by which future ages may be made wiser and better.)

"I imagine this man having lived to find his day-dreams vanish into emptiness,—to see his hopes fade into air,—to experience the bitterness of sad and blasting disappointment. He has sought, not for vice, not for sensual enjoyment, not for inactivity, nor as idle pleasure,—he has sought for work—and has not found it. He has so long held out his anxious, eager hand for employment and perceived it, like a shade, escape his grasp, that the very hand has become but a shadow, like the phantom which it pursued. He has longed for no royal throne and sceptre, for no courtier's pride or warrior's trophies,—he has sighed for no gold of Ophir, nor treasures of Egypt.—He has asked for the ground to till, and the field to plough,—and the commonest offices of labour have been denied to him through a life of anxious struggling.

"He has lived to hear the Parents whom he loved and honoured, scoffed at, as the causes of the earth being burdened with a pauper and an outcast; to hear his Father called,—even as the Father of mankind, the first of the whole human race, might have been designated—the father of a vagrant!—and this, indeed, with far less meaning than it applied to Adam, for his son was a murderer and a deceiver, branded and cursed—while the man about whom I am surmising can be called a vagrant, only because he has to wander forth, houseless as hopeless Cain—but without the guilt which sent the first man-slayer to traverse the unblessed plains of a thistle-

and-thorn-bearing Earth. Poverty hath now the names of guilt. This man sees his hopes of fame crushed before the moth, which testifies, at once by its destructive doings and its frail life, to the perishableness of all things here. With a view to benefit the public, he has sat up through long wintry nights, to store his mind with learning's varied and ever fruitful store, and he has found his labour wasted even as the lessening oil in his midnight lamp. The years of his life have passed as a tale that is told—and told in few words, and those, words of sorrow. He has studied hard, and has but gained knowledge which wearies his heart, and learning which oppresses his mind. He has dug deeply in the earth to plant precious seed which might produce an abundant crop of blessings to himself and to others,—and he has but turned up the worm that will not die, but preys upon his own fast-consuming frame.

"I can suppose this man in his utter broken-heartedness, setting up such a memorial as the stone we have beheld: to show that after years of virtuous striving and honest industry, after all his anxiety to do good to the world, he has gained from that cruel and hard world—not the bread which craving nature required, but simply and solely a stone.

"Thinking of the home from which his Father has been driven forth, to wander in the cold of winter and the burning heat of summer.—I can imagine him placing this stone to mark the ill-return that revered Parent had obtained from his fellow-men, after a long life of integrity, consistency, and independence.

"He is accustomed to failure. Yet has he an undiminished sense of his disappointments."—

"Ah! well," said my neighbour, "this, then, is one of the men your fancy depicts as placing this stone—let me hear who is the other. I suppose some half-starved and fainting wretch, for such your imagination seems to like to conjure up."

"The other man," I answered him, "is one in great affluence, rejoicing in his fortunate lot, and finding the sweets of wealth to be indeed pleasant to his taste. I think of him as one so loaded with the gifts of plenty, whilst from her ample lap she scatters her fruits and flowers upon him, that he has no time to mark whence the favours come. Thus, he knows not they *are* favours, but deems himself thus happy, because he has a right to be so

"The breeze of heaven blows so sweetly upon him, that it causes him to sink to peaceful sleep—forgetful, nay, all unconscious, of the balmy gale which lulls him to repose.

I suppose this second man of an indolent, easy, character; one who can love to lie down to sleep in the warmth of that very sun which rejoiceth to run his course. He can pass his hours in listening to what is going forward in the busy world, without desiring to participate therein.—He can dawdle through long days without doing anything that deserves the name of employment.—He can be content to see TIME pass him, with-

out endeavouring to pursue, and gain, if it be only a trifle, light as a feather, from his rapid wings.—He can swim down the current of life, without picking up even the flowers which float upon the surface, if his doing so require an effort or a care.—He exists and is satisfied :—he feeds, and it is enough :—he slumbers and is pleased at his listlessness. He is at ease if the sun shine upon him, and the breath of morn and eve fan him, without one thought of marking the day by any act of usefulness.

“ I imagine him also of a proud and pompous nature. He expects that all around him will hurry to gratify his inclinations; and considers as his due the servile homage which is shown to him. Mankind ever worship the rich man, as the Persians do the sun; and kneel to him who disperses to them aught of life; but equally do they prostrate themselves before him when sullenly behind a cloud,—because he has the power of shedding light and gladness upon them, though he use not the power he possesses.

“ But now, I fancy a sudden and great change comes over the prospects of this man.—We all know with what a sudden and desolating influence misfortune sometimes comes upon the richest and the most exalted. The Banker fails, and his customers are reduced from affluence to penury; from the coach and four to the garret and the dun. The price of an article suddenly falls, and a merchant, from being a millionaire, becomes a bankrupt and a pauper. The ship which was bringing home a man of high intellectual attainments, to fulfil his well devised plans for the aggrandizement of his family, is lost at sea, and his wife and children give up their satin ottomans and velvet couches, to be the inmates of a mean workhouse. Such things are common, in fact they are of every-day occurrence; and, that they are so usual, is one of the blights and miseries of domestic life.

“ Well, then, the man whom I am trying to depict, lives to find his prospects darkened and his sun gone down. He lives to see the ample garment that plenty wove, become the saddest of funereal robes for Hope: for so, in its present emptiness it appears, stripped as it is of all which made it seem that full and graceful garb. He finds bitter disappointment a potion which he is forced to swallow, although it revolts him at every draught.

“ His hopes have stolen the wings of Time, and have flown away, albeit, he remains lagging drearily on his journey.

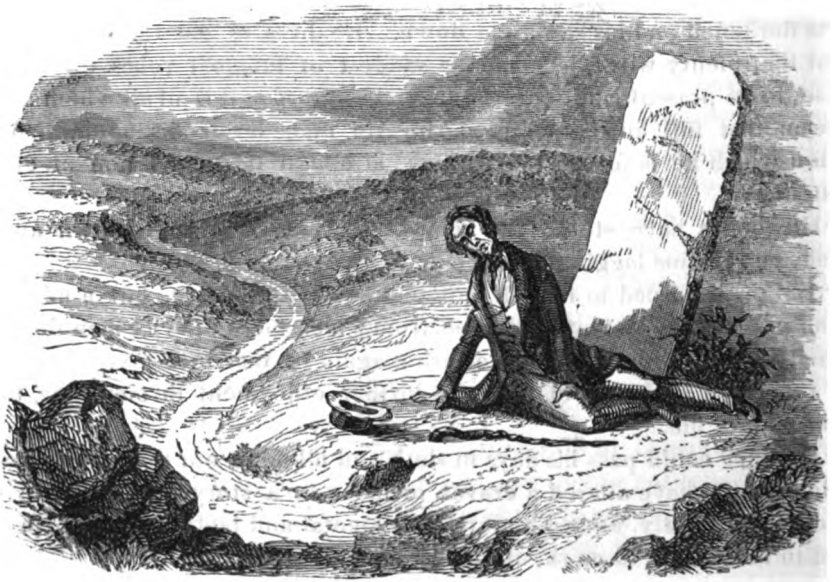
“ He once formed to himself anticipations of the future, but a mist has gathered over the distant landscape, from which birds of evil omen do continually rise. He looks for no clearing again of the once joyous scene—no repetition of hours of ease—no further enjoyment through the toilsome path of life.

“ He once could pass his days in sloth and idleness, nor thought it wrong to do so. To have altered a cravat, or listen to a story, was then, in his mind, to toil hardly, and to endure both mental and bodily fatigue. He has lived to be obliged to work, and work unceasingly.

“He has no time now for amusements, however innocent ; or for gratifications, although such as are almost needful to his health. He has to rise with the lark, whilst she wings her joyous flight towards heaven, but with him there is no sweet ascent to peace and happiness. He hastens from his rest to work for his daily bread, with labour too fatiguing for his bodily powers. The hand of which he was once so proud on account of its softness and delicacy, is now so coarse and hard from drudging, that he would be ashamed to offer it to a friend, if one remained to him who would accept it.

“He also finds his hard work regarded with contempt. He ought to be applauded for his readiness to earn his living by means that are honest and praiseworthy in themselves, and he perceives that, on account of his efforts and his industry, he is held in disapprobation. He has had to beg his employers for the scanty wages absolutely due to him, and he has received nothing but a curse. Man’s malediction is the severest of all evils to the spirit of man : the universal curse, upon the *great face of all creation*, has its deadliest sound issuing from the lips of weak and faulty man. Just are the judgments which proceed from Him who cannot err, and who, even in his wrath remembereth mercy. But those pronounced by man can never be merited, for, coming from the mouth of a guilty creature, they are ever tinged with bitterness, and not with love.

“I imagine then, the man of whom I have spoken, worn out and heart-broken, through these accumulated wants, those unceasing labours and those undeserved reproaches, about to lay down for ever the burthen of a distasteful life.—I can fancy him, ere his spirit quits its earthly mansion,



erecting this stone which has so much attracted my attention—to mark out that thus far he had come—he had managed in spite of provocations and persecutions, of sufferings and sorrow, thus far to come—and no further.”

“Psha!” said my neighbour, who had, like my reader, thought that I was very tedious and tiresome in my long speech—“Psha!” said he, “I dare say that the stone was put there for some simple purpose and not for any of the kind that you have been describing.”

The carriage wheeled on its rapid way, and in three or four hours more, we were safely deposited at an inn-door, in a large and populous town in the north of England.

My neighbour, who had listened to my fanciful ideas as to the lowly stone, informed me as we descended from the coach, that he was a resident in the town, and that if I were going to stay there, and was a stranger to the city, he would be willing to show me some of the remarkable buildings, &c., with which it abounded. I assured him that I should be most happy to avail myself of his offer, as soon as the visit I was about to pay to my friend at a village some twelve miles distant was over, accordingly, we made an appointment for a certain day, on which I was again to come to his town and be introduced to its novelties and attractions.

There is much that is worthy of notice in the humblest village in England, if a person will really give his time and talents to investigate it; and, of course, in a large town, the variety of objects being greater, his search is more varied, and often still more interesting.

My impatience knew no bounds to see my beloved friend, the Clergyman of the village to which I have just alluded, and I therefore ordered a conveyance to conduct me thither, with the least possible delay.

I cannot doubt, my reader, that you have often felt, (as I did at that moment) how greatly the desire to see a dear friend increases as the distance diminishes betwixt you. The road seems to grow longer and longer, the shorter it really is from the point of your attraction the hills appear to you to be of an unattainable height, although you labour through their steepness and their wearisomeness: you think you look upon the same tree and hay-rick for minutes together, instead of their flying past you in their usual method. The very air is heavy and lazy; it prevents your horses from pulling freely, and from breathing vigorously. When you are anticipating that you are at your journey's end, you learn that you are miles away from it, and that the residue of the road is very difficult to travel.

Most truly did I experience the reality of these sensations, as the jaded horses were urged by the tired post-boy into a faster trot. The vehicle shook violently enough, but, like an old man, it appeared not to advance, but merely to tremble in its endeavour to go forward. The nearer we got to the residence of my friend, the more engaging I felt to be the neighbourhood through which I was passing. I was sure that my friend had often looked upon these scenes, and was familiar to them, and from that

circumstance they derived a charm in my eyes, beyond anything that even natural beauty could bestow on them. As we arrived within two or three miles of the house, I looked anxiously to see if there were no boards or stones marking out the boundaries of his parish; and I soon discerned one, and hailed it as an announcement that ere long I should meet him I had travelled all this weary way to see.

How pleased was I to see the white cottage, with its fruitful vine partly hiding it from the spectator's eye; its green lawn in front, and its o'erhanging elms behind.

The church stood near to the parsonage, and was equally chaste and neat in its exterior. The dwellings of the poor parishioners encircled the church and the Clergyman's house, and seemed, like faithful warriors guarding their best friends, in protecting the temple of their Maker, and the habitation place of him who was a worthy Minister to that sanctuary, and a Father to his grateful flock.

As the chaise drew up before the door, my friend and his wife hurried forth to meet me, and gave me that hearty welcome which is one of the choicest pleasures we can ever extract from this world of cold-heartedness and of separation.

I was soon seated by a large fire, and in an easy chair, and in the most delightful society; exquisitely comfortable, and entirely happy.

The enjoyment which my visit to the little parsonage afforded me, would take up a longer time in narrating, than my stay under that quiet country-roof occupied. Happy days! entombed in the grave of memory! days which cannot return again to me, but which will live verdantly, even in the wilderness of sad thought, until reason and recollection become utter blanks.

Ernest Vincent, (for that was my friend's name,) took me with him in his morning walks and in his evening rambles. His wife, one with him in kindly affections, one with him in untiring benevolence to all the human race, one with him in gentleness and sweetness, would lean upon my arm as she bore to the little cottage of some aged pensioner, the choicest slices from the same joint of meat of which she and her household had lately partaken. It was a duty with her to see to the nourishing soup being made, which her own gentle hand was to bear to the sick child of some humble parishioner.

How delightful it was to me to see him whom I loved like a brother, walk through his parish, and recognize in every man a brother and a friend. The old man leaning on his crutch by the wayside, raised his hat from off his grey head, and faintly murmured forth his expression of joy at the sight of his minister; the old woman knitting at her cottage-door, paused to bid him welcome as he drew near; the children left off their gambols to run near him in the certain expectation of his patronising smile, and gentle words. Vincent never thought of himself and his own gratifications, yet, on his face, and in his eye, there was that which plainly evidenced that he

lived to his own best happiness, by existing, if I may say so, for the advantage of others. Such a person becomes indeed prepared for Heaven even ere he attain to it; giving himself up fully and rejoicingly to be an instrument, in God's hand, of blessing to man. Blessed be he himself of God and man!

It is true there were poor in Vincent's parish; but there were none miserable nor neglected. For the lowest there was ever a word of love, and a smile of kindness, as well as a trifle of money and a morsel of food. There was not for them much of either of the latter, for his resources were slender, and not far beyond what was requisite for his own subsistence, yet I pitied not the poor of his parish, nor longed to raise them from their low estate, and give them large houses, sumptuous fare, and rest from daily toil. No, I am far, very far from wishing that those born of wealthy parents, and those of indigent ones, should be put precisely upon the same footing; that every man should become affluent, and every cottage should be transformed into a palace. If those of scanty means meet with notice and with benevolent regard from those above them; if they can obtain sufficient to live in health, and enjoy their health, and occasional relaxation, I would not alter their condition. "The poor shall never cease," are the words of inspiration; but, that they should be *miserable*, was never the decree of a gracious Providence.

It was one of my treats during my sojourn at my friend's house, to rise up early in the morning, (though my personal acquaintance, will, I am afraid, laugh at this passage, and declare my narrative is entirely fictitious,) and to wander through the length and breadth of his parish. I did so purposely to enter into conversation with the poor people, and to hear from them the often reiterated commendation of him whom I loved.

He had established a perfect union of sentiment and bond of feeling among his parishioners, for on one point they all agreed—and that was in uttering his praise. Every man had a wife, a parent, a child, a brother, to whom Vincent had been kind;—every man had been benefitted by his counsel and his succour. He would have been an idol had he suffered himself to be so; as it was, he was but the hand which pointed to the proper subjects for admiration and reverence. He was loved, as few have the good fortune to be; yet he himself made that love subservient to a brighter and nobler object.

On one occasion (this was in the April of last year), I had risen a long time before the hour for breakfast, and had traversed every part of the parish, talking familiarly with all orders, that I might hear of my friend's virtues from every mouth. I had talked over the matter with all whom I met, and had yet time to spare before I should be required to meet my host and hostess at the breakfast table. I determined to extend my rambles, and see how things were conducted in the adjoining parish; whether friendship and peace reigned there also,—and kindly affections and kindly actions were

the fruits of an upright and consistent endeavour to do what was right. We all know how much anxiety we experience to know whether people act up to our idea of what is correct, although we perhaps have but little right to judge of their merits or demerits, or to laud or censure as we may choose to do. Such a feeling led me to make my peregrinations in a wider circle, and to ascertain whether those poor over whom Vincent had no control, were as good and as happy as his own. It was such a spring morning as a poet might utter his softest notes in commending. It was as settled, as warm, and as brilliant as summer, but softer and fresher and sweeter. Human beings and the beasts and the birds seemed to be unanimous in the belief that the season was that most adapted to gladden the animate, and to call forth into beauty the whole inanimate creation. It was one of those warm days on which all things seem to be placid in their joy;—the pleased cattle were reclining by the brooks with the calm expression of delight in their mild countenances—the shepherd was lying on the grass, although the dew had not yet passed away from it:—the wayfarer who had risen betimes to make his way before sun-rise, albeit but a spring sun had arisen, was resting upon the rustic style;—the birds even paused in their upward flight, to look down with satisfaction upon the earth below them, because it looked so gladsome. It was, indeed, a morning soothing to the mind of man; it lulled his pain, it spoke to him of peace and hope—and blessed him in its free and fondest accents. It seemed as if it had been ordained that men's minds should be thus filled with quietude and rest, in order that they might have full scope and opportunity to make (as they ever do under such circumstances,) gentle, yet certain advances towards Heaven. Small may be the progress, and little that which men thus accomplish, but still *they do progress* by that day's length (such a day! and such a length!)—towards a cloudless and an uninterrupted Immortality! Oh! such spring days are not unfit harbingers of ages of serene and unalloyed happiness. Such days are the turfey hillocks on which the traveller to heaven may both rest himself on his way, and obtain a view of the country which he seeks.

I would readily attest it as a fact that my reader, whoever that reader may be, has found his thoughts wander upon such occasions from the earthly realities around him, to something very far distant from the point whence they commenced; turning to that which seems to the thinker himself to be a new idea. Nevertheless it is not really so. We wonder what could have led us, in such cases, to some particular train of reflection; and we call upon each passing fancy of the mind to tell us whether it had led us so far away from what before engaged us, to the contemplation of the beneficence of creation's Author, and to holy gratitude towards Him. But passing fancy called up such considerations; even that great Being himself prompted our musings at the first. We might seem to some to speak vainly if we named religion as the nurse of our glowing imaginings

but we should, in reality, be calling, (like Pharoah's daughter,) upon no stranger, but upon that dear Parent who was the origin of the holiest and best of them all.

On that sweet morning of which I write, a landscape of surpassing and wondrous beauty lay spread around me. Above the scene upon which I stood gazing with such intense delight, a bird was seen to rest upon the wing; it had paused, and that so completely, that I was at a loss to tell whether it ascended or descended; it seemed to me the personification of peace and love; it might either be descending from the benignant angels, or ascending from the cottage of the honest, though humble husbandman.

The light was shining upon its expanded wings, and it seemed as if a blessing rested upon it, which it was willing widely to diffuse. It would have been a fit emblem for the spirit of a truly righteous man. One, who, living above the world, is not too high to feel a tender affection for it;—one who, though he has not quite attained heaven, is far too lofty to aim at aught else as his destination.

I walked on after a short interval, and then looked back from afar at the bird, which, as I before stood, had been exactly over my head. It seemed now, in the distance, and in the clear light, a very narrow speck;—a mere shadow, even with its outspread wings. I might have dreamed, (for I was at that time, as my reader may possibly imagine, in a fanciful mood,) that the bird was a line—only a line—to show the circle which the angels kept in their travels around the favoured children of MEN.

I could not pass away and forget that bird, although it was but a bird; as my less fanciful friends would have assured me.

I retraced my steps, taking the little feathered creature as my guide, until I found myself once more beneath it, and gazing up with delight, as I had previously done, at the charmer above me.

It hardly moved a feather; but rested calmly, like a fairy lake. Upon attentive observation I found that it soon began to move its little head, and direct its eyes to one particular spot upon the earth; to this it soon came nearer and nearer; and more and yet still more fixed did its gaze become. I could see, although it was so small an object, that it was deeply interested in something; and then I came to discover that ever and anon it expressed its feelings in appropriate tones, respecting the matter over which it pondered. I became now an anxious listener, as well as spectator; and recorded in my memorandum-book the words which the little creature uttered.

My reader, who is well aware that beasts and birds could talk familiarly, and with a moral point in former days, will, I am sure, believe my assertion that they are not the less able to do so in modern times, and that the present generation of birds are fully equal to their learned and eloquent predecessors.

THE SONG OF THE BIRD.

Happy, happy am I in my lofty height! I am so glad that I could sing for joy; and merrily and cheerily will I sing. As I have sat upon the branches of some spreading tree, the boughs of which danced in the wanton winds which sported with them, I have often listened to the words of men who trod the grass-covered earth beneath, and I have heard them express, in passionate words, the bliss of those whom worldly honours crown, and who reign as monarchs, or triumph as victorious generals. I envy not their boasted grandeur, I care not for their loaded coffers. I have a more safe and certain course for joy. For they whom most my fond heart loves, are finding, even now, the treasure which my sharp eyes beheld when distant from them. They (the tiny creatures!) are raising their precious burthens until they toil beneath the weight. Ha! ha! ha! ha! toil did I say? Oh no! it is not toil, for they intended to share with each other their common prize. It is not toil. When I heap up the food to bear to the nursling brood, or gather soft things for the small dears to rest upon, I can hardly bear up a load so mighty, to so feeble a body as mine own, and I begin to fear that I shall fall, conquered by mine own good fortune;—but when I call to mind what chirpings there will be in the nest, what fluttering of wings, what moving of beaks; the exertion becomes no labour. What mother—what parent bird, would ever give it such a name, where the gain is for the nurslings? When the hay, snatched from the sweetly-scented rick, is to make her darling offspring more easy and more happy? Then they can nestle together; and warmed and filled, can mock at the wind even if it come from the East, and at the rain though it patter at their side. It is not toil,—it is Joy! Joy! Joy!—That is a bird's word, and a very good singing word it is. We little birds, too, do not care only for ourselves, we feel for human beings, and we wish them well; although they do not think we are minding anything about them. How glad am I, then, to watch the couple who tread the turf below me. By the jealous earnestness with which they are hunting and searching everywhere for something, and with which they are collecting together trifles, however small they may be, carrying them away with ready and active hands, doubtless they are providing for pleasant meals, and balmy repose, for their laughing-eyed and loving little ones; for the prattlers who welcome their loving Parents home, with smiling lips and outstretched hands.

Oh! blessed, blessed, thrice blessed, Pair. Can it be possible that they are not united in the bonds of wedded and enduring love? Oh no! They are ever turning and looking at one another;—they must be a pair. I fancy I can hear them conversing, although the distance which divides us hinders me from really listening to their tender dialogue. But I know they are saying one to another, “we have enough now—we may return

to our home, for the little ones will fondly clasp us round the neck, and thank us in their lisping accents; and that *is enough*. It is nothing to us to hoard up the food for our own mouths, for we can bear the want of it without complaint or sigh; it is so very unimportant. Nor heed we that we lack the material to make our own couch soft; it is enough for us that our infants can eat, and be refreshed;—can smile, and be satisfied.

When, with playful caresses they bid us partake of their food, to kiss the lovely hands that proffer it will be to us the feast most to our heart's content."

Thrice happy they, who, (like this couple now before me,) can by their looks declare the future; for on their face is written the happiness to come,—the anticipated greeting of their children. Blissful they to whom thus to speak, is to behold the past, for it is the memory of glad hours gone by, that enables them thus to look forward to glad hours again. Warmed with thankful remembrance of the past, and hopefulness of peace and joy in days to come, they move on the way, carrying their prizes, which are indeed of rich price to them, for the sake of those to whom they are bearing them. Jewels borne to jewels of unutterable value. And now they appear to me to be nearing their own dear home, and by their manner, although I can but dimly discern it, it is easy to see and feel that some sound of love is issuing from their parental lips. They are saying, I fancy, (for we little birds can conjecture what human beings say in such circumstances, from what we songsters of the grove sing, when similar happiness is our lot;) "How blessed are we,—how rapturous is our fate, to have again gained the portal of the house which most we love, more than the marble columned, and splendidly ornamented palaces of Kings;—more than the gilded halls of glittering state;—more than the domes of Eastern tyrants. The ivy which creeps around our cottage walls, bears flowers more beautiful to us than all the shrubs of fragrant Araby.

"After a delightful walk amidst the green fields and pleasant lanes, under the bending branches of the noble trees, or among the flowering shrubs and plants, we have reached our home, where smiling faces and dear forms will greet us,—where sounds of childhood's laughter, and tones of filial affection, will be to our ears as music of a celestial harmony. The joys of home are richer than Oriental treasures.

"We have seen what countless mercies Heaven has showered in our path whithersoever our footsteps have wandered;—we have beheld them in vallies, and on hills,—in brooks and streams—in trees and shrubs,—on every inch of the grass—covered ground, and the lovely landscape,—and we return to find more abundant and higher mercies in the seclusion of our cottage home."

And so do I, after I have been singing my soft strains amongst the spreading boughs, seek my own sweet nest. Men suppose that I have tired myself with caroling, and gone, o'er-wearied with my own volun-

tary exertions, to seek a gentle and refreshing rest. But not so! not so! I have then but retired to the spot where my gladdest sounds are ever uttered; the well-lined nest where the tiny ones are lying with their little beaks raised to meet mine upon my arrival, and ready to hail me with notes of joy, and looks of tenderness.

I am as happy then, as the pair whom I have been gazing upon are now. I am a merry and delighted bird! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Thus ended the song of the Bird; and as he finished, he winged his way to his nestlings, bearing the plenteous reward of his zealous,—his maternal care.

As the bird flew away, I thought that I would endeavour to find out something respecting the man and woman who were, according to the belief of the little songster, so very pleasantly situated. It is always a most gratifying employment to observe anyone's happiness,—to see his toils crowned with success,—to hear his voice give utterance to the feelings which fill his grateful heart. For this cause I sought to gain some knowledge of that pair whom the Bird had rejoiced, in its own gladness, to think equally happy with itself. I found out both their names and their history, and I am therefore able to give, regarding them, the exact account which follows. It is a short and simple one.

Job Thornton and his wife had left their humble cottage on this bright morning with the intention of gathering together a few sticks, in order that they might take them home and light a fire, to cheer their children's chilled and feeble hands. And as they had nothing to dress upon the fire after it was kindled, they wished to warm themselves also at it,—and then—die.

They could not bear to die so cold and wretched as they then were.—They were cold at heart;—every thought and feeling were paralysed by no biting blast, but by the pinching hunger. They would fain be recovered sufficiently to breathe out a prayer for their offspring, and to raise their hands to their children's heads, as they pronounced the last blessing upon them, ere they departed from a troubled and sorrow-stricken world. For this reason did they seek the sticks to warm themselves by ere they should die;—thus were they occupied when the bird first saw them. They had turned and looked into each other's faces often in their wanderings, for they did not dare to look elsewhere; for where the real and seen face was not, the real yet unseen faces were. The countenances of their haggard and almost skeleton offspring were then before them in idea, and they trembled to mark how miserable and dejected an aspect they wore. The air was full of such forms (although each one filled but a tiny space,) and creation had the impress, wheresoever the Parent's eyes might rest, of infants born to squalid poverty, and to early woe. Very painful was the appearance before those loving eyes; and yet (how strange to say) it

was but the sight of those whom of all the world, those eyes had ever selected to dwell upon with rapture.

Such had been the sad thoughts of the Father and the Mother, as they gazed into each other's faces;—thus were they looking when the Bird observed them.

They succeeded in collecting together the few dry sticks which they required, and with their too light load, they reached the door of their lowly residence; they looked through the broken window, and they saw that their labour was in vain; for their little ones had departed, may we not say to bring down blessings for their Parents from happier realms?—To act as kindly spirits to their still treasured friends, and lead them to receive the comforts and consolations of Heaven? The Parents, as they reached their portal, and perceived their darkened doom, sent up to the skies their wail of utter agony. Their future seemed now a hopeless blank, and their cries were borne upon the warm and balmy air.

Thus, and thus only, were their voices heard. Not thus the Bird had sung.

The sad condition of Job Thornton and his wife convinced me that the parish in which they resided could not be in the same happy circumstances as that which my friend Vincent presided over as a Pastor, and benefitted as a Father. It is well known to any one who has taken the trouble to concern himself about such subjects, how much good one individual can do in mitigating the sorrows of others; and how different any place may appear in its condition after a very few months, or even weeks care, bestowed upon it by one person who really has its welfare at his heart.

A conviction of the truth of this remark, made me feel sure that the like zeal and attention had not been expended upon this district, as on that in which Vincent was so signal, and appreciated a blessing.—“I will make,” said I, “some enquiries of my friend, as to how things are conducted here, and if he confirm my supposition, I will look a little more closely into matters in this vicinity.”

After dinner that evening, I broached the subject with my friend Vincent, by remarking to him that I had risen betimes that morning, and had wandered some miles from his own village. Vincent replied that he also had been out for some hours before breakfast, and had found the morning air most exhilarating. “I presume,” said I, “you were about your duties even at that early hour.” “Oh no!” he answered, “I was only seeking to get health and strength for myself: I cannot take the credit of such motives as you kindly impute to me.” “Most assuredly, however, you would have given up every amusement and relaxation of your own, if your presence would have been useful within the meanest hovel.”

“Nay,” said he, “my self-denial is not quite so great as you imagine; for I should not easily have yielded up a walk at sun-rise.” Do you ever in your rambles, get as far as the parish of Lindsey-Thorpe?” “To be

sure I do ; why it's only five miles from here, at the nearest calculation of distance."

"And do you think that that Parish is properly managed?—I mean that the poor are looked after as kindly, and as narrowly as in this one of your own?" "Why! I am not a fair judge of my own merits; of course my self-conceit would lead me to say that nobody can govern and direct so judiciously as I can." "Well, then! will you tell me whether you believe that due care is bestowed upon that district?" "I have always held one opinion; and that is, that a man had much better attend to his own concerns, and mind his own business, than run down others, and find fault with those who are, perhaps, quite as good as himself."

I found that it was a vain attempt to endeavour to get from the mouth of Vincent any censure upon the Minister who had the adjoining cure; but I felt assured that things there were not as they ought to be,—for Vincent's meed of praise would never have been wanting where praise could rightly be bestowed.

I set out the following day to inspect carefully the place about which my enquiries had been made. Had Vincent spoken ill of the management there, I would at once have gone to those places in which I could best see the fruits of that wrong treatment. But as I had been left to my own supposition, I made up my mind to walk through Lindsey Thorpe slowly, and with attention; and thus form my own conclusion upon the sight which I there beheld.

My reader, then, will perhaps accompany me in imagination, whilst I describe the objects which that morning-walk brought before me.

The village was a long, but not a straggling one; its cottages were side by side, and it might have been denominated a street, had it not been that each of the humble tenements was detached, and that there was a green spread in front of them. The church stood at a short distance from the other buildings, and was an antique structure, covered with ivy, and hallowed by each year which had passed over it, and left it in its quiet grandeur. About a quarter of a mile from the green, stood the union workhouse; for this village possessed the enviable advantage of containing the workhouse of several contiguous parishes. Upon the same green was a large pond, near which the stray ducks and geese of the vicinity congregated, forming around it another union, happily devoid of the work which was coupled with the first mentioned junction. And there was the pound, for it still existed there, though modern innovations have swept away such things from most places, and allowed wandering donkeys to taste, without molestation or capture, the thistles which they are so fortunate as to find.

The first thing that struck my notice in the village was, that the doors of all the cottages were left quite open; far different to those in Vincent's district, where they were kept carefully closed; the members of each household liking to gather together, and enjoy the comfort of domestic

privacy. Here every door was widely thrown back, and passengers could see into all parts of their rooms. "This is a bad sign," said I to myself, "no man likes to be overlooked at all times. I fear that these rooms are thus visible only because the poor people feel certain that no one will wish to look into them. In Vincent's parish, all his flock are glad to welcome him to their abodes; but they do not desire that he should hear and see everything that passes within them. Here the villagers know that no one will visit them, and therefore they are thus negligent of the proprieties, and destitute of the comforts of home.

"But what," continued I, in surprise,—“what can induce that foolish beggar to stand in front of one of these wretched hovels? Can he be weak enough to think that he will be likely to derive any benefit from such a hapless family as that which can inhabit it? Yes, I suppose, that sorrow has blighted his mind, and that want has destroyed his powers of sense and of discrimination;—for, to a certainty, he is standing there, in mute supplication, waiting for the alms which yet his tongue does not ask for.”

And so he was, beseeching in silence—by the eloquence of looks; but suddenly, he starts, with terror depicted plainly and forcibly, upon his altered and pallid countenance; his features had been fixed in his resolve not to move till he obtained assistance; but now he fears to see how much more fixed is the gaze of the persons within, as they sit in silence, without even raising an eye from the bare ground.

As I pursued my solitary way, I could not help being struck by the appearance of stillness which reigned over all the village. There was no bustle, no vivacity, no work, no laughing, no talking. A death-like calmness seemed everywhere to prevail. If I saw a cow, that cow was standing still;—if I observed a child, he was resting upon the ground;—if I noticed a dog, it was an inanimate creature, and might as lief have passed for a specimen of art, as for a thing of nature. The donkey which was turned out to feed there, leaned with his head over the thistles sufficiently near to them to feel the inconvenience of having his nose pricked, but without the liveliness to remove it from them, or the spirit to partake of the food which he would have found so nutritious. A mental gloom and bodily lassitude thus governing the whole village.

I bent my steps towards the pond, of which I have before made mention. No railing guarded persons from walking into it upon a dark night. There was free permission, apparently, given them to do so. A woman was looking into the pond, not, as it seemed to me, because she desired to take water from it, either to quench her thirst, or to bear to her home for useful purposes; neither, assuredly, could she be contemplating it for the sake of seeing herself reflected there, for she presented but a thin and miserable object even to her own sight,—but she was looking into it in order to see much further. She desires to look into the vague depth, in order to forget real and

tangible things ; in the hope that her own fate might fade away from her memory, and that she might obliterate, by the ideas of fancy, the traces which real distress has left upon her mind.

I turned away from the pond, and climbed the hill on which stood the ancient church. "Here, at least," thought I, "there will be nothing so dull as I see elsewhere ;—quietude is here in place, and offers no sensations of disagreeableness or disgust. Elsewhere it is far different ; life ought to be seen, and animation to be evident."

I wandered into the church-yard, but soon again did I quit it. The church, indeed, was a venerable structure, and ages had made it seem still more holy in its calm serenity. But the church-yard filled me with sorrow ; there were graves in abundance,—graves of many generations ; but the last made were almost as inconspicuous as the first. No one cared that the tombs of the lowly should be kept neatly. The graves of the little children were only just high enough to catch a *Parent's* eye.

As I left the church-yard gate, I was quite astonished to hear the sound of carriage wheels, and I hastened back to see the cause of this unusual stir, and what effect it had upon the too quiet villagers. The cause of the excitement was a phaeton which had passed over the green ere I arrived upon it, and was about ascending a steep hill which lay at the Northern end. I walked quickly after the carriage, and when I came up with it, the driver was pausing on the hill to give his horses rest in their efforts. At this moment, a boy from the village came running, breathless, to the spot, and with his scotcher prevented the wheel of the vehicle from retreating down the ascent.

The carriage soon drove on, and I was surprised to see how the little fellow turned away, without any appearance of disappointment at getting no reward for his pains ; he had been taught by experience not to expect any.

This boy was but one instance among several which that village showed, me, of the unhappy and neglected state of the children there ; there was, in truth, an *attempt* at mirth on the part of some of them ; but it was *but an attempt*, made to drive away care, and was not the joy of the heart bursting forth with life and glee. And their very games, when they played, were those associated with dullness and wretchedness. There was a boy now and then to be seen sporting, but he sported in the puddle, amidst the dirt and the mud which composed it. Their vivacity was forced and constrained. They felt themselves to be children, and that to look what they were, they ought to aim at a certain degree of liveliness ; but they had no spirit in what they did ;—they were figures moved by clock-work, and they moved because their time of life made it needful, and not because they experienced any innate satisfaction from so doing.

A girl came near me, who was looking sadly dejected and worn, although alone some fourteen summers ; (or I should rather say some fourteen winters) had passed over her head. I could not help showing her by my face that I thought such a sorrowful aspect was greatly out of character

in a young girl, who usually is, at that period of life, a creature of song and of dance,—of merry eyes and laughing lips. She perceived that I was remarking her in the manner which I have named, and, annoyed that I should do so, she began to laugh noisily and vehemently. But I saw and felt that she only laughed so loudly, because there was much of grief that spoke loudly to her and to me; a grief she wished to hide, and the voice of which she sought to drown. Her gaiety was more pitiable than her gravity, and called forth from me the deeper sigh.

The very dogs in this sad locality seemed to have equal fears and misgivings with the reasoning part of creation. They looked at you with distrust as they passed, and flitted by, alarmed lest you should deal the unlucky blow which would send them yelling and injured to their homes. Here and there might be seen some thin and shaggy cur, sitting in front of a cottage door, and trembling and crying to itself over the expectation of the treatment it was likely to endure. I always peculiarly pity the dumb animals when they seem so miserable and fearful; short is their life at its longest extent, few are their enjoyments compared with those of man, and infinitely more trifling than his pleasures; I would that they were allowed the gratifications of which they are capable, and were permitted to spend in joy, their brief and passing lives.

I was quite distressed at beholding the way in which all persons looked at me in this village; there was no appearance of confidence in my wish to be pleasant to them, although I spoke ever so kindly;—there was no desire to breathe out to me the story of their woes, although I asked them ever so earnestly for the recital;—there was—in their opinion—no feeling in common between the rich and the poor man. To see a gentleman approach was sufficient to alarm and terrify them; they instantly supposed that he came to bawl at and domineer over them, and therefore they would fain have sought some place of concealment, and have escaped from any intercourse whatsoever. They had no brothers amongst their kind;—they had richer and greater men;—they had lords and masters, and that was all.

I came suddenly upon an old woman, in scanty apparel, and with an expression of much sorrow and apprehension in her face. She was picking up a *few dry sticks* from the ground, and hurrying as she did so, dreading they would be taken from her if any great person in office came near the spot; and she was about to bear them to her home, and make a little fire with them, at which to warm her chilled and aged limbs.

They would have been of no use to any gentleman, yet the poor creature had in her mind the vivid idea, (and she reasoned upon the future by what she had experienced in the past,) that if seen, she would be driven from her little stock of faggots, to go home and sit by a cheerless grate. She gathered up the sticks in her apron, and was about to hobble off when I spoke to her. She started; amazed at my words, for they were those of gentleness and pity. I bade her not to fear, but to answer me

openly and confidently. She tried to shrink into herself from terror, and in very deed it was the least possible space into which she could have shrunk. I spoke to her with compassion in my accents, and she answered me below her breath, from fright, and with all the manner of a timid deer. She suspected, probably, that I came like the wolf in sheep's clothing, with the design to prey hereafter upon those with whom now I claimed companionship; at any rate, she felt that her single word, or even the manner in which that word was uttered, might suddenly displease me, and then that I should let all my good nature turn into resentment. It was the treatment which she had met with in her old age, that had taught her so to think and so to judge of strangers.

I was at length, however, able to induce her to tell me her name and her age; the former was Jane Bamford, the latter was seventy—the three score years and ten of a mortal's troubled pilgrimage. She had just begun to be a little more communicative, and was explaining to me whereabouts her humble dwelling-place was situated, and to count up the number of years brough which she had sojourned there, when the sound of a horseman was heard behind us. Jane looked round, and when she saw who it was that



approached, she retreated in alarm, and would have suddenly rushed away had I not hindered her from so doing. The person who was on horseback was short, and stoutly made; he had a firm and determined countenance, one which had seen much of the wind and the weather, and remained callous and impervious to their attacks. He sat upon a grey steed, which

bore the marks of having had many a severe chastisement, and of having worked for many a year in laborious drudgery.

There was no mistaking the nature of the employment of Mr. Richards; (for such, as I afterwards learned, was the cognomen of the horseman,) his blue coat,—his top-boots,—his solid-looking whip,—his yellow leather gloves,—all marked him out,—A Country Doctor;—a doctor about whom there was no courtly suavity,—no drawing-room politesse,—no wish to prescribe “a little bit of chicken, or a small piece of a boiled sole.” He was, in fact—a parish Doctor. He was one who rides hard and determinately;—a man who knows he may have his own way with his patients,—may take off an arm or a leg if he likes to do so.

The Doctor was soon lost to our view, for his good old horse was a fleet courser, and bore him with great rapidity from the sight of the aged woman and myself. No sooner was he absent than the said old woman began to breathe more freely, and to look more contentedly. It was evident that fear and dislike, of the Doctor, were united and were powerful in her mind. I begged her to tell me the cause of her apprehension of the village Sangrado, and she entered into a long story which fully and perfectly explained it.

My companion spoke the *patois* of the Northern counties, and for that reason, I think it better to place her tale before my Readers as I committed it to paper in the course of the evening after my interview with her; and not to attempt to give the account verbatim as she uttered the words.

Perhaps, however, I should first premise, that the Doctor had paused slightly, and had raised his hat very respectfully, as he passed before the gate leading to a handsome house, which lay some short distance beyond the line of the humble cottages. A gate led up to this house, as I have said; but that gate, as I was afterwards told, was kept locked, and there was no bell by which poor persons who sought access to the mansion, could make themselves heard, and gain admittance. The rich came, of course, always in their carriages, and the sound of the wheels was sufficient to bring out bowing domestics, to welcome the great and wealthy to the abode of the Lord of the Manor. I mention this circumstance, as the Tale alludes to the possessor of this elegant and capacious dwelling, and touches also upon the fact of the manner in which its gate was always closed against the lowly and the petitioning.

I now proceed to give

THE STORY OF OLD JANE BAMFORD.

JANE was born in the same village in which she had resided for seventy long years. Her Parents were humble people, belonging to the same parish, and had brought her up in an honest and industrious way. It was a fact, however, and a melancholy one, as affecting her whole destiny, that there were none in her native place, who interested themselves for the poor,

or cared to make them happy, and to aid their virtuous efforts. The clergymen of this village, during her whole term of existence, had never been of the number of those who felt "the luxury of doing good:"—they did not *seek out* their flock, and consequently their flock did not seek the church, to hear the holy truths which there were uttered. Jane grew up to womanhood without any religion;—she, like her Parents, attended no place of worship, and were heathens in heart, albeit they were Christians in name. When Jane was about the age of twenty, she married a man in her own sphere of life; and she had a son born, of whom she naturally became very fond. Some twenty years passed, and her husband died, and she was left as a widow, dependent (as her own health was feeble), upon the exertions of her only child for her maintenance.

Richard Bamford was an affectionate Son, and he strove hard to let his Mother live in comfortable circumstances; and he was able so to do, for he was a lad of great strength of body and personal activity, and he was also very clever in his own line of business, [that of a thatcher,] and years passed on smoothly enough, while Richard brought home the fruits of his industry to cheer the sight of his widowed, and doting Mother. Every person who required his cottage thatched, was glad to employ Richard; for he was reasonable in his charges, and neat and expeditious in his work.

In the course of his business, her Son had fallen in with some persons in the village who were dissenters; and overcome by their efforts to induce him to join their persuasion, and moved also by their great personal kindness to himself, he had joined their congregation. Without stopping in this story, to discuss the respective merits of the Church of England and the Wesleyan persuasion, I may be permitted to remark, in passing, that whatever advantages may appertain to the former, (and doubtless in the opinion of many of my readers, these advantages are neither few nor feeble,) it is not to be wondered at that the poor will rather join themselves to the latter, if its members and its ministers seek to win over such, by personal acts of good-will, and by visits at their humble cottages; whilst the clergy of the Establishment, and the members of *their* flocks neglect to *seek out* those whom they wish to save, and to show by a care for their bodily welfare, their concern for their higher good. In saying thus much, I am far from wishing to depreciate the Pastors of the Church of England. Very many of them are ornaments to the age in which they live, and to the country which gave them birth.

Their earnestness to win over the erring and the base,—their disinterested sacrifice of health, time, and fortune, to their holy calling,—their temperate, yet zealous, advocacy for the truth, cannot but call forth the admiration of all who see them; and do, indeed, merit the thanks of a grateful country—made better and wiser, at once by their counsel and their example. All that I desire to say is this; that when ministers of the Establishment neglect to visit the poor at their own dwellings, and to shew

a warm interest in their worldly concerns and temporal well-doing, (and that this *is* the conduct of *some* is beyond a doubt,) then it is no wonder that the village Church becomes empty, and that the seats of the dissenting chapel are crowded by those, who find in the Dissenting preacher one anxious to be not only their instructor and their guide, but also their brother and their friend.—But to proceed :—Most unhappily for poor Jane, whilst her Son was one day working at his avocation, and industriously thatching the cottage of a near neighbour, his foot slipped, from some unforeseen cause, and he fell from a considerable height upon the earth.

He was lifted from the ground in a state of great pain,—his leg had received severe injuries,—and he seemed likely to be long confined to the house, without the ability to gain the means of support.

Some persons carried him to his Mother's cottage, and she perceived with great sorrow, that her Son's leg had sustained a fracture, and that he needed immediate medical care and skill. The young man was groaning in agony, when his Mother enquired where she could run to get help for him in his hour of necessity. He immediately answered, "go to Mr. Corlass, (that was the name of the Dissenting Minister,) he is always ready to see to my good ; he will be sure to procure a doctor for me now."

Jane hurried off, as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her, to the residence of Mr. Corlass ; but, unluckily, he had left home a few hours before her arrival there, and had gone a long distance off, to preach at the opening of the chapel of a friend. Jane was in sad trouble ; she knew of no place at which she could apply for assistance, with any hope of success. "I must go to the doctor of the parish," she said at length,—“I have heard he is a hard and unfeeling man, but I know of no gentleman who will have influence with him, and I must make the trial of calling at his own house."

Off went Jane with nervous steps, and a doubting heart, to call on the parish doctor. (The gentleman of whom my reader has already heard, as galloping past old Jane and myself, and causing such visible terror to my aged companion.) She rang the bell violently, both from her anxiety about her Son, and from the fact of fear having taken away her self-possession.

The door was opened by a boy who was accustomed to take round the medicines to the houses of the richer people in the neighbourhood. He had been for three or four years "in the profession," and was half a medical practitioner himself,—from what he had seen and heard. Jane began to tell him of the sad injuries her son had received, and of the state of pain in which he was lying.

Thomas took little heed of her tale, but kept on ejaculating, "Ah, well ! Ah, well !" Jane was astonished at the indifference he manifested, and at the callousness with which he said, "I dare say master will give him a call

to-morrow, when he is round your way." Jane urged the necessity of *immediate* attention.

"Oh! its out of the question," said Thomas, "master's dining out, and can't be disturbed."

"But he *must* come," answered Jane, waxing wrathful,—“My son must not die because the doctor's dining out.—Where is he? and I will go and seek him.”

"Oh! no, thank you," said Thomas—"I'm too wise for that, and master's too wise for that,—for he never leaves word where he's gone to."

The poor woman burst into a flood of tears, and groaned aloud at the idea that her son might die for lack of proper and instant care.

At that moment a door opened at the end of a long passage,—it was the entrance to "the surgery," and thence walked forth a tall young man of about twenty years of age. He was the assistant—he had only come within the last three months to the gentleman with whom he now was; and he was created in a softer and kindlier mould.—

"What is the matter, my good woman?" he asked.

The tale of her sorrows was soon told, and was ended with the earnest prayer that he would tell her where she could find the doctor,—

"I dare not do it," he answered her, "I wish I might tell you, but I have strict orders against it."

"Is it not a cruel thing, sir," demanded Jane, "that the poor should be so treated?"

The young man had strict orders not to say yes to such questions; but, assuredly he did not say "No." After a pause, he said, "I will come down and attend to your son; and whatever he needs done, I can perform it."

Jane could not but feel grateful to the young man, who was ready to hurry off directly to assist her sick son, and to speak the words of sympathy to his mother. But she had a fear, (a natural fear in a poor person,) of young men acting as surgeons; however good may be their intentions, and however wishful they may be to render effectual assistance; their experience can be but little, and with the temerity of youth, they may be apt to perform operations, and use quick measures, where less precipitate treatment and gentler practice might be much better for the patient, and to those also to whom the sufferer is dear.

From such feelings as I have named, Jane declined the offer of the kind-hearted assistant, and told him of her firm determination to have the personal care of the doctor for her child. She supposed that the clergyman would have much weight with the medical man, and so she set off for the Rectory, to beg the Reverend gentleman to procure her the doctor's attendance.

As Jane went on her way to the Rectory, she could not help entertaining considerable doubts as to whether the Doctor was really absent from his

own house ; as, whilst she had been waiting in the passage, she had heard a gruff voice speaking within. Of course it would not have done for her to breathe such a supposition to the assistant, or to the boy. However, it now pleased her to think that such was the case, for, could she prevail on the Clergyman to send a strong message to the Doctor, requesting him to see her son, she would know where the medical man could be met with. She hastened to the Rectory door—she rang the bell with an eager hand—she listened with intense anxiety to hear the footman's step approach : he came as she had desired—he opened the door for her to enter—he requested to learn wherefore she had come, and then he gave her the saddening information that *his* master was also absent. Great was Jane's sorrow at finding that her hopes of obtaining for her son advice of a proper nature, were to be a second time crushed and disappointed. She thought that possibly the Rector had been summoned to the bedside of some sick parishioner, and that by pursuing him there she might induce him, when he had finished his visit, to go on and pay a second one,—namely to her injured and unfortunate son. “Where *is* the Minister?” Jane asked of the footman. “He cannot see you to-night,” was the reply. “But tell me *where he is* ; for I require him very badly, indeed. Is he at some place where he is much wanted?” “Why, as to that,” answered the domestic, “I am no judge ; I'm quite sure, however, that it's quite what he likes himself, that he's gone about.” “Tell me then where he is, and I'll follow him without loss of time.” “Why ! he is up at Squire Wetherby's, at the great house.” “Is anybody ill there then, that he is there so late as this?” “Ill ! dear me, no ! It is a hunting dinner !” Jane hurried away to “Wetherby Hall,” but she had great fears of her reception there : the report of the character which the owner had for harshness, and for a kind of amusement at the tears of others, had spread far and near. He was the dread of the poor people who were obliged to be brought into contact with him.

His friends said he was a very merry and pleasant man,—a very jovial and delightful companion ; but the humble and the craving mentioned his name with a shudder, and with an involuntary sigh.

Jane reached his gate, and there were two servants waiting there, ready to throw it wide open so soon as the wheels of an expected carriage should be heard. They were going to turn her away, at once, when she asked for the Minister, and to tell her to come at some more proper and seasonable time ; when the Squire was heard to call out for “the woman to be shown in.” She was accordingly ushered into his presence, as he sat over his wine, with his boon companions who filled the sides of a long and well-covered table.

The Squire began his jokes a little ; but the earnestness of the woman induced her to speak in a louder tone than the Squire could drown the sound of, and out of necessity he asked her what she wanted.

Jane told the simple tale of her present trouble. The Squire heard of her son's injury, but did not exactly understand what she wanted in consequence, or why she had come to the "Hall."

"I want the Doctor," said Jane, passionately.—"I went to his house, and I am sure he was at home, and yet he was denied to me. I went on to the Minister's, thinking he might do something for me to get the medical gentleman to come to my son, but I found he was dining with you, Sir; and now I have followed him to beg him to act for me."

The Squire told Jane it was absurd to suppose that the Minister could have as much weight with the Doctor as he could, for "he was Lord of the Manor, and the first man in the county almost."

"Then *you* will help me," exclaimed Jane, "and order the Doctor to come to my son."

The Squire joked and laughed, and would do nothing for her. At length she grew very angry, and told the Squire that she knew he *could*, as the proper authority, give an order to compel the Doctor, and that she demanded that he did so; otherwise, if her son died, through lack of care, she would make the whole matter public to the world.

The Squire pondered the whole affair over in his mind; "Why it's very true," he said to himself, "*I am* the proper person to give orders for the parish-doctor to go to the poor, when he is needed, and I *must* give them; although it's very hard he's to be roused up from the quiet of his own room, to go out in the cold air about this nonsense."

However the order was given by Mr. Wetherby, and Jane ran all the distance to the Doctor's, to deliver the summons which was at length in her possession.

"What, *you* again?" said the boy, as he opened the door for the afflicted Mother.

"Yes, and I must see your master."

"Oh! I told you before you couldn't: what's the use of keeping bothering?"

"Look here," said Jane—"here is an order; *now* your Master *must* come with me, as he's the Parish Doctor." "Oh that's it," said the boy, and he hastened to his employer, who was coolly reading the Newspaper above, with his legs upon the sofa, and a cigar in his mouth. As Jane listened anxiously from her station in the passage, she heard the following dialogue ensue. "Oh! if you please, Sir, there's a poor woman down stairs." "Well, boy, and what do you come to me for about that? I thought you knew your duty better than to trouble me about such matters." "If you please, Sir, her Son's very ill, and he wants to see you very bad." "Tell her I'll look in upon her in the course of to-morrow, if she'll leave her address." "The woman says, Sir, her Son must have a Doctor at once, for he's fallen from a great height, and is very much hurt." "Well, boy, how can you think of coming to me, and expecting me to go

out on a windy, cold, night like this?—You've got no feeling." "I tried very hard, Sir, to refuse her, for I was sure you would be afraid of the weather." "To be sure I should;—well, if she presses so, tell the assistant to go,—it'll be practice for him: the weather won't hurt *him*." "But Sir, she's been to the Squire, and he's given her an order for *you* to go; and so I'm afraid you must." "Been to the Squire! has she? I'll teach her to go to the Squire again, and take a person out when they don't want to go. I'll teach her how to do it again, that I will." So saying, the Doctor sprang upon his feet, rushed into an inner apartment, and brought thence his flannel-lined great coat, his ample woollen comforter, his trebly-lined gloves, his strong cotton umbrella, and his thick-jointed clogs, in order to protect himself from the inclemency of the season. As he proceeded to insert his arms into the sleeves of the coat, to tie the comforter in three or four folds, to fasten his heavy clogs, &c., &c., he kept on muttering to himself, "I'll make her regret this, the longest day she has to live."

At length, fully accoutred, he descended the stairs, and looking with eyes full of fury, at Jane, he said, "Now, Ma'am, I'm all obedience;" and they sallied forth.

As they proceeded on their way, Jane began to express her sorrow at having been obliged to call the worthy Doctor from his home. "It's no matter, Ma'am," said he,—“not the least in the world; it is for us poor medical men to run directly at the bidding of others—no matter whether they have got the money to pay or not.” “I would not have troubled you, Sir, had I not had great fears of my Son's life:—for who knows if inflammation came on, how soon he might be hurried out of the world?” “Pshaw! Ma'am,” answered the Doctor again—“you won't make me believe that you really were afraid that your Son would die, because he fell down and bruised his leg? That's rather too much of a good thing.” “If I had not been in terrible alarm, Sir, I'm sure I would not have put you to inconvenience; it was no wish of mine to make you uncomfortable.”

“It's idle talking of comfort. The poor Parish Doctor may be tired out with his work all through the day, and may like to take a few minutes repose in the evening; but some old woman, perhaps, thinks her Son's in danger because he turned his ankle, and forces the Doctor to jump up again from his couch. Don't talk of comfort.” The Doctor refused to open his lips again, until they reached her lowly home. Upon entering the room where the widow's Son was stretched upon his bed, the medical man found him suffering extremely, and groaning with the pain which he experienced. The Doctor asked him what was the matter, and whether he had ever felt such sensations before: also whether his appetite had been good recently, and if his Father had been a healthy strong man of a robust constitution? Adding besides other sapient questions, put alike by the Court Physician in Belgrave Square, and by the Village Surgeon in the remotest districts.—“I see the whole case,” said Galen, “you have had a fall from the top

of a house, and have been hurt thereby ;” and having passed this valuable opinion, the Doctor drew himself up, and smiled at his own ability. Thanks to his youth and strength, however, the widow’s prop got well again ; and ere many weeks had elapsed, was able to get about as usual, and to return to his employment for the support of himself and his beloved Mother.

The Doctor made up his mind that the presumption of Mrs. Bamford should not go unrequited. “ Why could she not have waited till I was coming her way ?” he said to himself ; “ and why should the young man be in such a hurry, that he could not put up with a little pain ? I must put a stop to these measures, or I shall have the whole parish sending for me when they want me, and that ’ll never do.” The soliloquizer waited his hour of revenge :—he nursed the darling feeling in his heart—and it was not long before the opportunity for its gratification arrived. There was a public dinner to the yeomanry of the neighbourhood a few weeks after,—and the Doctor, as one of the leading men of the place,—one equally feared and admired,—feared for his disposition, and admired for his healing knowledge,—was, of course, to grace the table with his presence.

The room was crowded, and when the Doctor spoke, the tongues of humbler and less learned men instantly became mute.

After the meal was finished, the conversation took a turn, from politics, (which had previously been the engrossing topic,) to the domestic matters of the parish. The Doctor held forth at considerable length, upon the impropriety of poor people setting themselves up in opposition to their betters, and disregarding the wishes of the better educated. “ Now, gentlemen,” said the Doctor, “ I’ll give you an instance of what I mean ; you all know young Bamford and his Mother ; and you all recollect his having a slight fall, and getting himself somewhat injured thereby.” “ True, true, Doctor,” said the worthy yeomanry, “ we know all about that, and we were very sorry for his ill-luck.”

“ So was I, gentlemen, at the time,—but my feelings were soon altered. He actually compelled me, (that is, his Mother did, and he allowed it,) to leave my house against my inclination,—and when I was not at all well myself,—and to come out on a cold, dark, raw night, to look to him ! Although his bruises were of little moment, and he would have got well of himself, without plaguing and bothering me !

“ And, gentlemen,” continued the talented practitioner, “ I’ll tell you what it is ; conduct like this ought to be shewn the estimation in which it is held ; if every man is allowed to dictate to his betters, who can tell what the world will come to ? Parish doctors will be good for nothing but to be trodden upon, (and he shuddered at the bare idea,) and the world itself will be turned upside down,—thoroughly upside down. Now this I say, that I shall use all the means that lie in my power,—faint and feeble, indeed, my means may be, yet, such as they are, I will assuredly use them,—to put a stop to this in *my own* parish. I will never give a job to this

Bamford; and if, gentlemen, you will be guided by me, and attend to my advice, you will not do so either. Depend upon it, that to those who, from this time forward, refuse to let Bamford do anything in thatching their houses, or repairing the roofs, I will give my best advice and patronage. It is from no bad feeling towards Bamford I say this: but I feel it my duty, and every man is bound to do his duty, at whatever sacrifice it may be."

The Doctor was a man of no little importance in his own circle. He was a person who had the means of serving the residents in the neighbourhood, by his recommendation or assistance, in various ways.

He was on good terms with the Squire, and with the Clergyman, and a word from him went a great way with either of those gentlemen.

What I have just said will be enough to convince my readers that poor Bamford very soon wanted a job in his line of business,—and wanted it in vain. The persons who dined with the Doctor declared they had no ill will against Bamford; in fact, that they would be ready to do anything for him that lay in their power; but that they had families of their own to see to, and that they could not make an enemy of the Doctor. "Charity begins at home," they wisely remarked, "and we must look after ourselves first,—for it is a duty that we owe to ourselves to do so." Poor Bamford anxiously sought employment, and everywhere he went, he met with a positive refusal. No one would aid him with work, and he felt sadly grieved and vexed.

Bamford saw plainly how things were, and determined to go himself to the clergyman, and beg his influence with the people in the vicinity, to restore him again to their favour; and he set out on his way to the parsonage-house; but, as he went, he felt some fears of facing the Rev. Gentleman, having so little personal acquaintance with him; therefore Bamford determined to draw up on paper an exact statement of his case, and present the same to the dissenting Minister, to whom I have alluded. He, however had but very little weight or importance attached to his name, and so he went on to the rectory. He met a similar reception to that formerly given to his mother by the servants. The Rev. Gentleman was not to be seen,—he was either out, or engaged, or he could not be seen by strangers. Several times Bamford tried to meet with him, and as often went away dissatisfied, and discouraged. At length, however, fortune appeared to smile, in some faint degree, upon him. Just as he was about to depart from the Parsonage, having heard the oft-told tale of its owner being absent from the house, the clergyman descended into the hall, dressed *cap-à-pie* for the hunt.

"Did you wish to see me?" he inquired.

"If you please, Sir," said Bamford, "if it's only for a minute."

"Be brief then, young man, for I have important matters to attend to, and must soon be gone."

Bamford told his tale.

"You don't sit at my church, I think?"

L

"No, Sir."

"Why is that?"

"I hardly know, Sir, what to tell you. I was never brought up to it, and so am not to be blamed for going elsewhere."

"What were you brought up to?"

"To nothing, Sir, unfortunately for me; but when I was a big boy, I turned dissenter."

"Turned dissenter! then go to the dissenters for aid in your concerns, and don't come to me."

"Alas! Sir, they have no weight in the parish."

"I'm glad they have not: I never serve dissenters, young man,—so good day to you."

Bamford could not get employment, do what he might to attain the object. He tried without ceasing, but ever without effect.

"I must leave this place, Mother," he said, sorrowfully, "and go elsewhere to try and earn my bread."

"I will go with you then, my Boy; we will not be parted, after living so many years together."

"No, Mother," he answered, "you have friends in this place, who have known you for years, and they have the means of making you more easy. I will not take you away from them, and carry you to a parish where I shall perhaps be as bad off for work as here, and where you will have nobody who knows you."

Bamford carried out his intention. He moved to a distant parish, whence his Mother heard of him only at intervals; and her home was no more gladdened by her only, and her darling Son.

No wonder, then, that the poor widow looked terrified at the appearance of the doctor who had wrought such hardships for her; or that she trembled before every stranger, lest they should find the means of stopping her scanty comforts, and dimming still more the scenes of her former joy.

I told old Jane of the manner in which the parish was conducted where Mr. Vincent was the Minister;—how he gave every hour of his day to the pleasant task of making the flock over which he presided better and happier; and how he made the grief of the poorest, and the woes of the weakest, the griefs and the woes of his own heart.

Jane's eyes glistened at the recital. Oh! Sir," she said, "happy are the people who live there! I wish it had been my good fortune to have done so."

"I will try what can be done for you yet; whether you cannot be removed there, and then you may have your son to live with you again. There would be no fear that you would not have friends to look after you; for Mr. Vincent would be the best of friends to you; and by his example as well as his precepts, he has taught the Parishioners also to make the wants of others, and the welfare of others, their especial care."

"Oh!" said old Jane, "I shall leap for joy to be once more with my child. It will be better to me than all the gold and silver in the world."

"Things are but badly conducted here," said I to myself, as I turned my footsteps from the neglected and unhappy parish. "I will assuredly speak to Vincent on this matter this very evening." But when I talked to him on the subject, he seemed very reluctant to blame his neighbour.

"I will most readily do what I can," he answered, "to benefit my poorer brethren; but let us use due care that, before we interfere, we ascertain correctly whether affairs are really as bad as they are represented to be; perhaps, by some *one* who is discontented, and out of humour."

"Certainly," I answered. "I will go there again to-morrow, and carefully survey (if time permit,) the various portions of the village, directing my especial attention to those places, at which I am most likely to come to a right opinion."

"If, after these researches," said Vincent, "you still hold your present judgment, I will, most willingly, do what I can to better the condition of the inhabitants of the adjoining district."

"A bargain," said I; and on the next day I set out for the scene of my late, and my further contemplated investigation. The workhouse (the Union,) naturally enough, perhaps, suggested itself to me; but a little reflection convinced me that it was better to go first to one or two of the ordinary huts of the poor, and to the National School-room, and to the small public-house, and there see the people, in what would be a just and correct light; not murmuring for the sake of gratifying their own morbid and severe sensations. I thought that I would, subsequently, go to the workhouse; but that I would first make up my mind whether the statements which I heard were legitimate, and average ones. The rich man as well as the poor one, the Minister equally with his flock, the landlord as much as his tenant, should have justice, strict and entire justice, done to them. The workhouse would, probably, be filled with those who would speak against all authorities. I therefore determined to walk along and take matters even as I found them. It was another beautiful day, and I enjoyed to my very heart, the walk which carried me to the parish which it was my object to scrutinize.

There is an erroneous feeling which very often enters into, and takes possession of one's mind upon such occasions. We wander through the country,—the beautiful and luxuriant country! upon some glorious morning, when the flowers are opening, the birds are singing, and the sun is shining gladly and brightly, and we feel convinced that the poor must feel happy in the enjoyment of "the Country."

Perhaps, in the pursuit of our profession, we are, as it were, bound to London, or some other town;—far from the rustic delight of the green and laughing fields; and we envy, and esteem as blessed, those persons whose lot has been placed among free pastures. We forget that the poor

do not look upon these things as we do ; that if we were to speak to them of the pure, blue sky, they would point to the holes in the roof of their cottage where it is always too visible ; that were we to allude to the pure and joyous air in which it is the privilege of their family always to dwell,—they would tell us of the wearing cough which injures their children, in consequence of their constant exposure to the weather ;—if we were to tell them of their sweetly scented flowers, they would narrate a sad story of how the flowers have been torn up which decked the graves of their little ones in the village church-yard. In a manner very similar to this, if we travel through the country, at our ease, in some comfortable vehicle, and, looking out of the window as we are whirled along, we behold an old man sitting down by the way-side, we are ready to exclaim, without consideration, “ Oh ! happy pastoral state ! Thrice happy he who can thus rest in and enjoy, such a retired and enviable situation.” We remark the man in his *one happy* instant, or rather one which our own associations make us think such, and we do not give a thought to the many days and months of sad gloominess at the narrow home of the aged, or of the toil and weariness which the old man experienced to get even to the spot on which he is now reclining.

I acknowledge, then, to something like such erroneous feelings on the morning to which my present sketch has reference, as, on arriving at the village of Lindsey Thorpe, (the condition of the inhabitants of which I had come to inspect), I beheld some rustics in the far distance. The birds were singing and hopping from spray to spray ; the sun was looking with a smiling countenance upon the world he blessed, and the insect creation sported in his beams, and thought that summer had already arrived, in its full heat and power. As I thus mused, the peasants to whom I have alluded, drew more nigh to me ; and I found that they were a woman of some fifty years of age, and a boy of about ten.

They saw not the sun above their heads,—for their eyes were bent upon the ground ;—they heard not the voice of the bird, for they listened softly to each other’s murmurings ; they were filled with the grief of their own hearts, and they mourned in unison. They, in very truth, were objects for pity, and not for envy. They had dwelt all their lives in the country, amidst fields and vallies which were beautiful to the spectator from whatever point he gazed upon them ; but they had never perceived the loveliness of nature, with her ten thousand charms. They seemed as if their only desire was to continue to walk on together through life, and at length together to pass beyond it, and that, as no person had ever noticed or pitied either of them, it might be ordained as mercy, that they, (those two uncared for,) should die at the same moment. I fancied all this, then, and that the entire love of each was centred in the other ; although I subsequently found that such was not the fact. The world had yet for each, one pleasure more than I supposed it to have ; but it occurred to me, when I

first looked upon them, that they existed but for the sake of the affection which was shared between them. I went up to, and addressed them ; but they were almost too heart-broken to regard me. They had not only the misery of hunger to sustain, (and who that has the goods of this world, knows how severe that misery must be ?) but they had to endure the yet heavier evil of neglect ; for no one aided them in their efforts to support themselves ;—no one felt for their bodily, or their mental pains. They soon, however, perceived that I intended to act benevolently towards them, and they were willing to give me all the information which I sought, which, indeed, was only as to their names and their dwelling-place. To my fresh acquaintances, Mary Franklin, and her son George, I must now, then, introduce my readers. They led me (for so I asked them to do,) to their little cottage, which was in a lane a short distance from the other tenements of a similar nature ; and a wretched place it was ; it was dull and dismal,—it was cold and chilling. The door refused to keep close, and thus admitted the wind both in summer and winter ; but the shutters to the window declined to keep open, and so made the room always dark. The shutters were the only things that would close. Everything within was dirty ;—it appeared as if no one had thought of bestowing the common care of clearing or dusting out the room, for months past. Such furniture as was there, was in confusion,—a chair was lying upon its side,—a table was stuck into one corner, whilst a box (in which I presumed some articles of clothing were contained,) was placed precisely in the way of every person who entered.

I was half tempted to turn round precipitately and quit the place. "These creatures," I felt inclined to say, "are ill-adapted for this beautiful country. The glories of such scenery were surely not destined for such low and dirty people as these are." Yet I soon corrected myself, and saw the impropriety of sentiments like these ; I recollected that when I had been in some rustic lane, gathering elegant and delicate wild flowers, and some common looking ragged boy had passed me, I had felt almost angry with him for marring the attractions of the scene ; yet it was *in the path of these poor creatures* that the God of nature had sent these beautiful and abundant flowers.

I began to talk with Mary Franklin, and found her tale, little different from that which I had expected. No gentleman would help her in her exertions to support herself, and her second son ; (the boy who had been walking with her,) and her elder son, had tried hard for work, and had not succeeded in procuring it.

There was a total want of sympathy in the parish for the miseries of the humbler classes, and every day since the death of her husband, six or seven years before, she had more and more experienced this. Whilst she was talking to me, I heard a heavy, and *monotonous* footstep approaching ; the woman's eye brightened, and the little boy jumped from his seat

to welcome the new comer. The step to which I listened was evidently that of some unfortunate lad who had been toiling for work for a long time, and had failed to receive any. He had, doubtless, risen early in the morning, at the dawning of the glad day, (the brilliance of which dawning his vacant eye saw not,) to seek the fruits of honest industry, and had been refused the right to labour. He was a steady youth of twenty years old; he carried all the marks of one of those people whom we see prowling about continually asking for employment, and ever failing to obtain it. He looked at me, but he did not care to speak, or even to bow; he sat himself down by the side of the empty grate, and bent his head upon his hands.

His clothes were not sufficiently large for him; they were those of his deceased Parent, and had been altered to his size some years ago; who can wonder that they were ill suited for him at the present time? He had on, too, the heavy nailed shoes of his Father,—weighty things,—weighty as if he had inherited with them the burthen of his Father's sorrows.

His Mother spoke to him, but he gave no answer. Hunger and cold and disappointment had made him half brutish,—had turned him from being a pleasant and good-humoured lad, into a very sullen and morose one.

His little brother sought to gain his attention by the winning ways of childhood; but the elder one looked at him doggedly and sulkily. At length he rose from his seat, and I fancied he was going to relax a little, and say something to his mother, his brother, or me. He only walked to the door and stared out, occasionally whistling between his teeth, in a discontented and almost passionate manner. His mother began to talk to me about him. She assured me what a comfort he had, for a long time, been to her in her widowhood, how he had endeavoured to soothe her in her troubles, and to cheer her up in her gloomiest hours of despondency; but, unfortunately, as he advanced to manhood his conduct had totally changed; and in his disgust at being unable to find anything by which he could gain a living, or rise in any degree above his present degraded state, he had seemed to forget his lone mother and his little brother, and to settle into a confirmed and bitter discontent.

He was now ever ready to find fault and to grumble,—but never to aid and to comfort; he sought work always, still; but his manner had become so repulsive from the frequent rebuffs he had sustained, that that alone would have furnished an obstacle to his gaining it.

From his position at the door, the elder son (Daniel,) moved away, ejaculating, "Fool! Fool!" I quite started at hearing him speak, for I almost began to regard him as an automaton possessing motion, but not the gift of language. I inquired what he had seen, of which he spoke thus contemptuously, but he did not make me any reply. I turned towards the door to see to what it was he had applied the term he had used. Nearly in

front of the cottage there was a donkey standing, with its nose placed against the bare and barren ground, and there did it patiently tarry without moving in the least. It had an expression of face so good, so mild, and so trustful, (even against all experience,) of the kindness of man, that it seemed impossible for it to believe that the ground had been suffered to remain with nothing to be produced for it to feed upon.

"Fool! Fool!" again said the young man; "it bears with patience its starvation, and it looks as if it hoped for better times." So saying, he again drew close to the grate, leaned his head upon his hands, and refused to utter another word, in spite of his mother's earnest entreaties.

"My son, as I have told you, Sir," said Mary Franklin, "was very different once from what he is now; and how changed he is in his looks too, Sir! Once he had a sweet amiable face, all smiles and softness, but now he's all quite hard-looking and frowning. But it's no wonder when we come to think of what he's had to go through. He has been continually thwarted in all his plans, and all his endeavours to get food for himself and for us. Look here, Sir," continued Mary Franklin, drawing



out of the box, of which I have before made mention, a small gilt frame, which, through all her poverty, she had preserved with careful fondness, "look at this picture, it was done for him ten years ago, is it not a sweet, innocent countenance?" I looked at the likeness, it was in reality a wretched and tasteless daub, the clumsy work of some self-instructed village artist. It would have been a good picture of any of the inhabitants of

the cottage, as they now were, for the picture was so *unlike life* as it is generally seen ; but whilst I despised the sketch, I admired the mother's admiration of it.

"I wish you would burn that old picture," said Daniel sharply,—“what's the use of it?”

"I would not part with it for any money, my dear," answered his mother, "I value it very highly."

"Psha!" said he again, "I wish it and myself were both at the bottom of the sea, and then there would be no more fuss about it."

"Do not talk so, Daniel," responded the poor woman, "there is one who always loves to look upon your face, and who would be broken-hearted, indeed, if you were lost to her."

"Look here," said Daniel, taking a broken piece of looking-glass out of his pocket, "I picked this up—is not this a pretty thing for a fellow to look in and see his lantern jaws, and his ragged clothes? I think, that with men, the best way is for nobody to look at them, not even themselves. I wonder any one should have these looking-glasses, when everybody, (so I think,) looks so wretched and miserable—it must be torture—self-inflicted torture, to look at themselves in them."

"I'm sure," said his mother, "every one does not look unhappy or miserable:—there's the Squire, he seems, and always is, I believe, the very picture of merriment."

"Oh! no! he's a brute—don't talk of him."

"Did you ever see his picture, Sir," asked Mary, "that was done by some great man or other? it hangs up in the hall. I got a sight of it one day, when I went there to ask for some coals."

"Not I," I answered, "I have no acquaintance with the Squire."

"It was the *size* of life, and looked very lively: he was just going off to the hunt, in his red coat, and all his dogs were about him. The Steward said it was very much thought of on account of its good pro-pro-proportion—I think the word was that he said."

"Strange," thought I to myself, "that the proportion should be so good when he is wallowing in his wealth and keeping his horses and his dogs, while thousands are starving—perishing, for lack of a morsel of bread."

"I wish I ~~was~~ dead," groaned out the elder son, "if I was dead, I should then be at peace, and happy; but I never shall be as long as I live."

"How do you know," I asked, "that you *would then* be happy? My friend, you ought to study to bear your hard lot,—for indeed it is a hard one,—with resignation, and to understand what ground you have for your hopes of bliss hereafter. But if you are morose and unkind to your mother, and if you murmur against Providence, how can you have any confidence of rest and joy in Eternity?"

"I know nothing about all that; but I know if I was dead I should be happy—the same as everybody is when they die and are quiet."

It was no use to debate this point with the young man ; and, in fact, his opinion, however erroneous, is the feeling of thousands. They judge of this matter as if life and death had a kind of connecting horizon ; and *they join their earth and heaven, only because their view stops there.*

"Why not try to rouse yourself," said I, again speaking to the dogged-looking youth, "and endeavour to cheer your mother ? I daresay, that if the Squire and the other great people of the place saw you more respectful to them, and more pleasant in your looks, they would be inclined to do something for you."

"Psha, nonsense!—they never look at the poor, nor care about them. I've been up at the Squire's house sometimes, and seen the poor line all along the front ; and he has come out, and walked down between the rows of them without deigning to look at them. And then I've seen some grand thing or other arrive from London by the carrier, and I've seen the carrier take it out and carry it carefully as if it was a new-born child, and the Squire has watched it as if it was as dear as his own life to him. The poor did not know what it was:—we only knew *it was nothing alive, by the care which the Squire bestowed upon it.*"

"But you must not despair of getting employment, for by despairing, you know, you grow careless of seeking it, and of course what is not asked for, will never be obtained."

"If you were in my place, you would not talk so, I can tell you. Do you think that a poor fellow can go on hoping and trusting for ever ? Oh no ! it won't do. I go about the village, and I am hungered and chilled, and I stop short every now and then to feel in my empty pockets—and all the time I am certain that there is nothing whatever in them. Oh ! this is heart-breaking work." The young man turned away from me, and threw himself down in the corner of the room, in a state of boiling wrath. So I turned to address myself to Mary Franklin, who had raised her younger child upon her knee, and was caressing him with maternal affection ; the little fellow clung around her neck, and a gleam of sunshine at that moment seemed to brighten the dark and saddened scene.

"I wish with all my heart I could get some employment for your son ; but I am afraid I have not the ability to do so. I wish also that he would shew more signs of civility,—but his manner, at present, is so hard and sullen, that it is very much against him."

"I know that, Sir," sighed the Mother, "I know that. How different he once was ! He was all civility, all cleverness, all life, all joy. He's sadly altered ; and even a Mother's eye is forced to know it, and see it."

"It is a thousand pities that he should have changed as he has : I know the cause now,—that ill treatment and neglect have made him what he is ; but a perfect stranger would not be able to tell anything of that, and would think his present manner his natural one."

"So they would, indeed, Sir. As he walks the village to look for work,

he often writes up that I may know if I come to look for him, 'Daniel Franklin has gone by;' and I often think, Sir, it is true of him every way, and that he has gone by in all things." I looked at Daniel as she spoke, and as my eye fell on him, I could not help being struck with a sudden look of pleasure which came over his countenance,—a look, for which I was completely at a loss to attribute any cause. It seemed to me as if he had heard some sound which delighted him; but in such a case, his sense of hearing must have been infinitely sharper than my own.

A few moments after I had noticed in him this unusual brightness of expression, he rose and hastened out. I looked after him from the door, and perceived that he ran,—actually ran, in the direction of the eastern end of the village. His Mother did not seem surprised at his departure; for she was well accustomed to strange freaks on the part of Daniel;—but my curiosity was excited, and I determined to follow the young man, and (if possible), to find out the reason of his leaving the cottage so abruptly, so I at once bade Mary Franklin good bye for the present, and started in pursuit of her son. On getting out into the road, I found that Daniel had made the best use of his legs, and was a quarter of a mile in front of me. I would not, however, consent to be so soon defeated in my purpose,—so I started running in the hope of overtaking him. He very soon turned abruptly to the left, and was hidden from my view—but I took good care to observe his route exactly, and when I came up to the spot at which I lost sight of him, I also left the high road for the retired pathway, and I was then soon able to tell whither Daniel's journey tended. The sound of a drum and a fife issued from a little, obscure, dirty public-house, at the end of the lane. My new acquaintance turned gaily into the tavern, nor did I refrain from following him even into such a place. I entered the tap, and there beheld a motley group assembled, which I will endeavour to describe. Such a sight is often to be witnessed in our rustic districts; and is frequently gloried in by our politicians, as the cause of our splendid and unconquerable ranks being always filled.

THE VILLAGE RECRUITS.

Round a little deal table, sat half-a-dozen persons, very different in their aspects, yet all equally remarkable.

There were two very young men, evidently of one family, by the cast of their countenances, their height, their dress:—in fact had nature and art conspired to mark out relationship, they could not have done so more effectually than in the instance of these two brothers. Not more than twenty years, if so many, had passed over their heads, and lightly had those years flown by; and in all the vigour of youth, and in all the pride of manly strength, they appeared before me. They were jovial, merry fellows, such as pass through the world without a pang, excepting such as actual bodily pain inflicts; who can take the world as they find it, and

find flowers in paths where the less light-hearted can perceive only thorns—such were two of those who formed the group around the table.

But how different was the young man next to them! He was very tall, and very pale, with a lofty and thoughtful expression of face, his long black hair was pressed back from his pallid cheek by his thin hand, and he was looking forward intently, but not as might have been supposed, upon the scene around him, for his mind was full of other ideas, and of far other sights than that which met his gaze. Born in humble life, as was evident from his mean garb, he yet bore that stamp of native gentleness, which poverty and care have no power to obliterate. He rested with his elbow upon the table, and many and various were the meditations on which he was engaged. He ensured the respect of the beholder, before he spoke a word or moved from his seat—for he was such a man, as had he been born in a higher sphere, would have risen to first-rate eminence by his talents and manly conduct.

Next to him again was a far different personage. A youth of some sixteen years of age, with a weak and vacant look. His natural silliness of appearance increased very greatly by the quantity of intoxicating liquor of which he had been a most willing partaker. He was dressed as a plough-boy, and was evidently *a mere plough-boy*, without, an idea beyond, or scarcely beyond, the pleasures of eating bacon and sleeping on the top of a cart-load of hay. He was in a state of stupid delight—he sat grinning to himself, and making faces to express the rapture which filled his childish breast.

He turned round and stared at me as I entered, as if he had never before in his life seen a person, and as if, moreover, he had no regard, (as in truth he had not,) for the feelings of the individual whom he thus rudely eyed. Having surveyed me to his heart's content, he folded his arms, threw himself back in his chair, and was as happy as a king.

The jaded and ragged man who sat by him was very unlike any of those whom I have mentioned. He seemed about sixty years old, and wore a look of intense anxiety. He was one of that peculiarly miserable class, of whom one inquires, as soon as one beholds them, "Who are those, wretched objects?" Distress of mind, and want of common sustenance had worn him to a shadow, but there was much of spirit still within him;—of pride that owns no master,—of activity that will shew itself in action,—of ability that wants only an opportunity to evidence its force. The first impression that one formed on looking at him, was, that he was oppressed with some absorbing solicitude—the next, that that solicitude was of no trivial and unworthy character. His mind was not one that idle fancies would have strength to shake.

And now the last of the circle was Daniel Franklin.—He was fastening into his hat the newly acquired streamers, which marked the wearer's entrance into the military profession. He surveyed me as I came in, with

no small signs of dislike, because he surmised the fact, that I had tracked his footsteps to his present abode.

No time appeared to have been lost in enlisting him into the service, for I suppose that two minutes could not have elapsed between the time of his arrival and of mine ; and yet in that brief interval, he had passed through the requisite forms of admission into the "suit and service of war." Daniel seemed to be greatly roused from his lethargy, for he looked with animation about the room, and into the faces of the assembled company. Thus was the group around the table formed.

But I found four other persons in the tap ; and before I describe the two most important of them,—the two most important in the whole scene before me,—I must advert to the remaining two ;—one of whom was, in a general way, the first man there, and the other of whom, was usually a mighty attraction in the same public room. The first of these was, as my readers will, I doubt not, surmise the Landlord of the little public-house where the party were drinking. He was a jovial creature, with a jolly face, and a shining nose, with a bulk of more than ordinary magnitude, and a voice of more than ordinary depth. He was the very man to make things pass off pleasantly under such circumstances—for he could sing a song which was as good as many average melodies, and considerably more merry,—he could tell a story which was as laughable as such facetiæ generally are, and which had certainly already been proved to stand the test of time ; and he would drink two to one more than any other man, when his customer paid the reckoning. He was what is denominated "a substantial householder :"—it was true enough that his wealth was not great, and that his income, such as it was, was an uncertain one—yet his capacious size well entitled him to the appellation of "Substantial," while by his tarry-at-home qualities he fully deserved the title of "Householder,"—and House-keeper, into the bargain. The villagers had never seen him without his white apron—and whilst they were sad and sorrowful his face shone like the sun in its brilliancy and its gladness. The world had its joys for him whenever a person could be found to wander within the precincts of "The Happy Farmer,"—and to call for a glass of its famous beverage.

Upon the occasion to which my tale bears reference, he was standing with a foaming tankard in his hand, and glowing with satisfaction at the numbers before him. Near him stood the Venus of "The Happy Farmer," the presiding goddess of that blissful temple ; she was short and stout, with a round face, small features, and an abundance of flowing tresses ; she had a smile for every comer, and a soft word in return for every piece of politeness that was bestowed upon her ; she had graced the tap and the bar of the "Farmer" for twenty years, but yet, not only in her own estimation, but in the estimation of those who frequented it, she was young and beau-

tiful, as the day on which she commenced her duties there. Many a villager, when endeavouring, in his dreams, to picture some face of loveliness so dazzling, that he who beheld her elsewhere than in dreams, would never find her image depart again from his vision, could rise to no sublimer height than the face of "Susan!"—Susan, who had handed to him his porter-pot, and tendered to him "the Indian weed," and had smiled as she did so. What would the bar have been without her? a blank—an utter blank. She was the light of the system—the rose amongst the weeds. Without her, the worthy landlord might have stood with his clean shirt-sleeves and his open countenance, but these would have offered but little inducement to the younger part of the population to come within the portals. Now, whilst "Mine Host" gathered around him, by his own attractions, those whose years had made them wise enough to prefer a lengthful story and an oft-told joke to long ringlets and coal-black eyes; the charms of Susan brought the young and the gay—those who liked to join the "*utilis cum dulce*," and, whilst they smoked their pipes and quaffed their ale, to interchange soft words with the bar-maid, and then throw side-long glances between each puff and draught. Susan was now at the elbow of the landlord.

It remains for me to mention the two most distinguished characters in the apartment—and I leave the very greatest of all to the last.

There stood near the open door a man with a large drum fastened round his neck, and a pipe attached, so that he could play upon it without needing his hands to hold it to his mouth. He was not slothful in making use of either of these musical instruments; he beat the drum as if in a rage with it, as if he fancied it composed of the enemy whom he wished to destroy; and he blew upon the pipe as if he would rend it, as well as the skies, with the blast of his war-call. I am sure that the sound might well have had the effect of putting the enemy to flight, although I leave it to those whose powers of judgment are more acute than my own, to determine whether it would not have been likely to do so even if the melodist came unattended by soldiery.

He was a man of whom—had not one beheld his drum and his fife, the emblems of his office—one would have wondered in what way he procured his living. He was shabbily attired, with a very old hat upon his head, but which was profusely adorned with ribands. He made a good subsistence by accepting any job that was offered him; and his musical abilities greatly increased his opportunities of so doing. 'To play for a recruiting sergeant, (as in the present case)—to perform for Punch when he visited a country town—to run messages—to work in gardens—to rub down horses—were all within the compass of this accomplished person's capabilities. He was

"Everything by turns, and nothing long."

These were the employments of his graver hours—while with drinking,

U

smoking, swearing, laughing, cock-fighting and dog-fighting, he passed his leisure hours greatly to his own satisfaction. It was said that he was also a collector of spare silk-handkerchiefs and pocket-books, but to this, as I am not censorious, I decline to testify.

I have, as I have said, kept for my last description that of the chief person of the whole scene,—“the Hero of a hundred” such carouses and successful gatherings. He was a short and very fat man; he wore his full dress uniform, which was, moreover, decorated with ribands and ornaments in profusion. He had two large medals suspended by little pieces of coloured tape, but whether they were badges of his triumph over the far distant enemies of his country, or commemorative tokens of the year on which his Queen was crowned Sovereign of these realms, is not for me to determine. Suffice it to say, that they looked very gaily, and shone with a military effect, and that in the eyes of the rustics, who ever followed in his footsteps, they were pledges of his valour, and of the pre-eminent position which it was his wont to maintain in the battle field.

The Sergeant's face was uncommonly red, and his whiskers were extremely black; when he determined to look fierce, and impress the spectators with an idea of his terribleness in the bloody plain, and of the high standing which his courage had given him in society, his gaze was enough to throw the multitude into awful consternation. But when he chose to attract rather than appal, and to talk in a soft voice, and a condescending manner to his male auditory, and to bestow even gentler accents and a sweeter smile upon his female hearers, he was so delightful a creature as to captivate the hearts of all who saw and heard him. Such was Sergeant O'Donovan, for that was his appellation.

Ireland had had the honor of including his grandfather among her sons; and consequently our present hero bore an Irish name, although he himself was an Englishman, by birth and in sentiments.

On the occasion to which my present sketch has reference, Sergeant O'Donovan was standing at a short distance from the table, round which sat the group whom I have already introduced to my readers, and he was addressing them in impassioned and eloquent strains.

A glass of ale was upheld in his right hand, and with his left he was making action suitable to his words. At the tender parts of his harangue, —those which were intended to melt the heart to pity, or to excite praise of the merit of his own kindly nature—he smiled towards Susan, who surveyed him with intense admiration. As he spoke his sober and wise sentiments he turned toward the worthy Landlord, who nodded approval, (as indeed he would have done to the remark of any customer;) and as he uttered words exciting to brave deeds and heroic actions, he bent his body in the direction of those persons whom he had recently induced to enter into the service of her most gracious Majesty.

“Come, my lads,” said he, addressing his recruits, “let's drink success

to our arms and reward to our merits! You've begun such a course as you'll be proud of to your dying day. You'll raise the name of your country to such a pitch as it has always held; (the Sergeant was not particular as to the correctness of his imagery, so long as it was striking) and make the French tremble if ever they set their faces again on our shores. Think what a thing it is that your wives, that dear sex, that all soldiers love better than their lives"—

Here the Sergeant smiled at Susan, who shook her head at him as much as to say "ah, you can talk fast enough."

"Think, I say," continued he, "what it is that your wives should call you their preservers,—their benefactors—and that your little children should lisp your names as they sleep upon their mother's knee.

"If you should even fall in battle, what is it?—we must all die some time or other; it's a sad thing to think about, but it's a fact, so it's no use to deny it. Man dies off in a moment, when a sword cuts off his head, just the same as if he died of old age, or any other lingering disease. A wise man knows he must die, so why not put up with it?"—

At this sapient and philosophical observation, he looked towards the Landlord, who shut his eyes and looked very sad, as if shocked at the remembrance that Death does not confine his attacks to the battle-field.

"If a man falls in battle, then his name is famous in history, and he leaves a memory behind him to all after ages."

The quick eye of the Sergeant perceived at this moment, that to some of his auditors, the idea of their falling a sacrifice to their valour was by no means a pleasant one: that they wished to continue to afford examples to others, of courage and patriotism and not to fill a soldier's grave; so he wisely changed his theme.

"But you will *not* fall, you will return when the war is over, to your own homes and taste the sweets of repose and the blessings of love."—

Here there was another smile at Susan.

"Think what I have gone through—fighting single-handed with five men, and killing them all with as much ease as I would take a glass of ale—put into a dark dungeon when I was made prisoner, but making my escape over a wall two hundred feet high:—but my country, gentlemen, has known my worth, and so it will know yours.

"Many and many's the time that you'll bless me for calling you out to the ranks of glory, and making you brothers in arms. There is nothing but pleasure awaits you too, in peace. No labour, no ploughing, no reaping, no toiling—all singing and dancing, and laughing, and talking, and flirting. A brave life is a soldier's—three cheers for a soldier's life, and one cheer more at the end of that!"

Several at the table willingly responded to the request of the Sergeant, and drank to the heart's content of the worthy Landlord, who smiled upon the scene before him, and counted up already, with pleased anticipa-

tion, the receipts which the pots of porter and glasses of ale would produce him.

The mirth of some of the company "grew fast and furious," and very many and various were the toasts given, and very funny were the songs which the inspiring ale occasioned. The Sergeant failed not to keep exhorting them to drink; while mine host's loud-toned voice was heard ever and anon applauding the valiant warrior, for his manly and hospitable bearing.

I was little observed, for the party supposed I had been induced to come in by the sound of the music, a sound seldom to be met with in so retired a village. The glee was at its height. Glasses were smashed as soon as they were emptied, the table was vigorously knocked by sturdy fists, and laughter and sport reigned triumphant.

At the very time when pleasure was at its utmost height, the door opened and in rushed three persons, whose appearance startled the whole of the assembled company.

The foremost of the three was a thin and pallid woman of about fifty years of age. She was dressed in widow's weeds, and looked scared by the distress under which she was then labouring. Her agitation was so intense that she seemed hardly able to identify the individual whom she sought for; her eye wandered round the room; and then she intently noticed each of its inmates with such an exactness, that one would have supposed her anxious to find out whether in him she saw the object of her search, the idol of her heart's affections. She cared not to encounter the rude gaze of strangers, or the laugh of those whom drunkenness made inclined for laughter. Her mind had one object in view, and that one she would have sought through an armed force.

The next who entered was a thoughtful, pensive young woman;—not less eager than her predecessor, and only kept back by her maiden timidity from showing her solicitude as plainly as her elder companion. She might be about twenty-five. She was one of that class of people who can manage to keep up an aspect of respectability, even while hunger and cold are injuring their health and strength. She wished to inspect the room to see if he was present whom she sought, but the fear of the rude jests of the young men, and the heedless insolence of the Sergeant, restrained her from acting upon the impulses of her affectionate nature. She glanced timidly round, and made the effort to find out who composed the group, without staring at any of them who might receive her gaze in a manner far different to that which her modest character led her to wish.

The third person who came into the room was a little girl of about ten years old. She was a happy-looking child, and although it was evident she had come upon an errand of sorrow to herself, yet, from the merriment of her disposition, the native joyousness of her mind—she could not forbear smiling at the strangeness of the place into which that errand had led

her, and feeling amused at the queer aspect of the man who was acting as musician at the door, and at the military bearing of the Sergeant who was now watching the party that had just arrived. The girl had come to do another's will, but she cared much for those by whom she had been thus commissioned. She loved them, too, for whom she was looking, —yet she loved them not as the other two whom I have described, loved those whom they had followed to the village ale-house.

I have said that the Sergeant was looking at the persons who had come in ; but he was merely scrutinizing them—conjecturing who they were, and what relationship they bore to the men who were round the table. He was, perhaps, also endeavouring to meet the eye of the most personally attractive of the three, and to see if she would not smile upon him, as few village belles had ever failed to do.

The Sergeant was not dismayed at the sight of the females, for he knew that the money which had made their friends soldiers of Her Majesty the Queen, was duly paid to them ; neither was he surprised to behold them, for he was well accustomed to such sights, to behold women following after those whom he had enlisted, and seeking to win them back again to the scenes of home, and to the pleasures (such as they were,) of their natural and humble dwellings.

The Sergeant was not surprised, and little cause would he have had to be so. When was woman ever found wanting in that affection, that unchanging, absorbing affection, which has led her to seek those she loved wherever her faltering footsteps could bear her in the lengthened search ?—When was woman ever found to sit down in inactivity, and bewail the fate of those who were dear to her, if untiring efforts, uncomplaining self-sacrifice, and unselfish energy, could benefit and bless them ?

The Sergeant was not astonished to see them enter, and no more was I. I was desirous to hear which of them would speak the first, and to learn of which of the men they were in pursuit. I rose from the place where I had seated myself, and walked to that part of the room in which I could get the best view of the faces of all the company.

I have, a short time since, described a weak-looking boy, who appeared in such a state of intense pleasure that nothing could well be compared to his felicity. The increased quantity of drink of which he had partaken, by the time the three females were in the room, had made him additionally, and foolishly, merry. “ Poor silly Boy ! ” thought I, as my eye rested upon him, “ who can be caring about you ? I should think nobody in the whole world.” At that moment, I heard a piercing shriek of happiness, and the widow woman rushed forward and fell, in an agony of tenderness, upon the neck of the simple youth. “ My son, my dear, dear son, have I got you once more within my arms ! My treasure ! why did you leave me, and plunge me into sadness and tears ? ” The lad looked up in her face,

and laughed. "It's no use talking, Mother; you won't get me back again, that's sure."

"Not get you back, my son! then my home will be desolate indeed."

"Oh! I can't help that; you know you can't expect me to stay at home always, just because you wish it."

"Oh, my Boy! leave this place and come once more, and I'll do all I can to make your home cheerful and pleasant to you."

Here the agonized Mother caught her son by the arm, and endeavoured to drag him from his seat at the table, to lead him to her dwelling; but the youth pointed to his hat, and laughing, cried out "Look! Look! ain't I a soldier now—and I mustn't be a prisoner?" He pointed to the ribands which adorned his hat, and as his mother looked at them she was obliged to lean against the table for support. A cold shivering came over her, and the words which she tried to speak refused to come from her faltering lips. She gained, after a few moments, strength sufficient to clutch at the ribands which decorated his hat, and throw them on the ground.

"Oh! this won't do, Ma'am," said the Sergeant, "we mustn't allow Her Majesty's colours to be insulted in this way. I put in the colours with my own hands, and nobody has a right to take them out again."

"Come away, my Boy, and leave this place," said the Mother; and she used her force,—a force beyond what would have been conceived possible from her apparently weak form,—to draw her son towards the door.

"Pardon me," said the Sergeant, taking hold of the widow, "you must not take him away, for he's enlisted now, safe and sound."

"I care not for your enlisting," she cried, furiously, "you come round the village on purpose to try and lure away 'poor fellows who are too young to know better; you ply them with drink, and talk them over with fine words, and then you leave sad and broken hearts to weep and wail at home over their ruined state."

The Mother again tried to drag her son from the room, and the Sergeant rather rudely interposed; he caught hold of her hand and strove, by main force, to withdraw it from her son's arm.

"You hurt me!—You hurt me!" she said. At these words the young man of the dark hair and the pensive face, whom I have described, sprang from his seat, and rushed forward towards the officer,—

"Take off your hands, Fellow!" he exclaimed, "what! would you hurt a woman?"

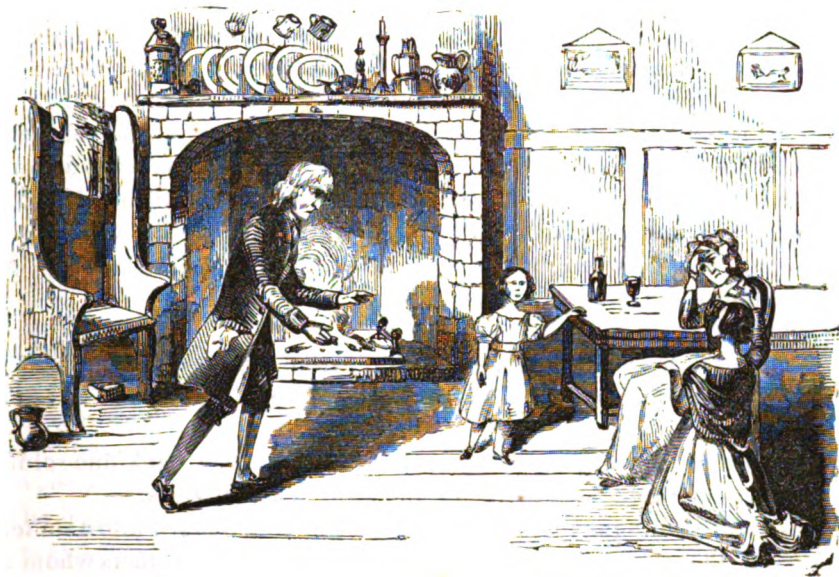
"Come, come," said the Sergeant, "we'll have acting by and by—let's have some drink now, and the comedy afterwards."

"The young man looked towards him with disgust, and then turned towards the woman with pity depicted on his countenance.

"It's no use," said he, addressing her.—"Your son is enlisted now, and he *must* serve. I wish you had come somewhat earlier with all my heart."

The poor woman threw herself in a chair and sobbed aloud at her fate,

which she now felt to be a hopeless one. With the instinctive sympathy of the human heart, the younger female rushed to her side, and mingled heavy sobs with those of the widow. At the sound of this second voice



the oldest man of the group round the table, who had kept his eyes bent upon the ground from the moment the three visitors arrived, now rose hurriedly from the table. He rushed to the person whose kindly grief had reached his ear, and said in a low tone, "Mary! dear Mary! don't cry, for I can't bear to hear it." His daughter, for such she was,—sprang from her knees and threw her arms round his neck.—"Oh! Father, how glad I am that I've found you! I came to search you out, but I saw so many strange men here that I did not dare to look at them."

"Go home, my child, and do not think of coming any more to such a place as this; I cannot bear to see you in a house of this kind."

"Come with me, then, Father, and I'll be glad to go; but I cannot consent to leave you."

"Oh! *he* may go,—take him with you my pretty one," said the Sergeant, nobody is going to stop him, I can tell you."

The old man heaved a bitter and heart-rending sigh.

"You will come with me then, Father?"

"No! no! I'll stay yet, and try him again."

"Try him? what! for the young man to be given back to his mother?"

"Oh no! Mary, I want to enlist; I'm a burthen to you, and your sister. I can get no work, and yet you have to feed me, though you have little

enough for your own cravings. I wish to go and fight as a soldier, and if I'm shot, it's no matter."

"No matter! Oh! Father, Father! how you do talk." And the harassed one leaned her head upon his shoulder and stood in petrified grief.

"Come, come," said the Sergeant, "what in all the world is the use of these cryings and sobbings? Let's get rid of the old man at any rate."

The daughter placed her arm within her Father's, and they were about to leave the room; he looking eagerly round every moment as they did so, to see if the Sergeant would not relax, and suffer him to join his newly raised forces. The little girl thought this presented a favourable opportunity for her to execute the commission with which she was charged, and accordingly she ran round to the place where her two brothers were sitting, (the young men between whom such a striking likeness existed,) and caught hold of the hand of one of them—

"And you come too."

"Nonsense, Janey, run home, and don't trouble yourself about us."

"Oh! but Mother says you *must* come, and we all want you; and come along."

"Fiddlestick! don't you fret about it; we shall come back fine soldiers in red coats and gold lace, and with fine swords at our sides."

"No! will you though?" said Jane, and her face relaxed into a smile, at the idea of the grandeur which was about to adorn the brothers whom she had known so differently accoutred.

"To be sure we shall, my girl; and when we come back from foreign parts we'll bring you back such presents,—pearls and jewels, and all such fine things!"

"Oh! thank you! thank you! I'll go back and tell Mother, then, that it's all right, and that you're not going to be shot. Mother took on, and said you'd be shot, and so we were all crying about it; but I'll tell Mother how it is, and then we shall all be happy again."

So saying the thoughtless and gleesome child tripped out of the room, first bidding her brothers an affectionate good bye, and curtsying to the Sergeant, about whom her opinion had very much changed, in a very brief period of time. Whilst she had been conversing, the old man and his daughter had gone away.

"You're the right kind of fellows—you are," said the Sergeant, addressing the brothers, "you know how to stand up for your country as well when you're sitting at a table over your ale, as you do in the battle field. When a man once agrees to serve her Majesty, and puts on the colours, it's no use his fighting shy afterwards, and trying to get out of it. He ought to say,—'Here I am ready to fall for my country, because I know that my country won't forsake me afterwards. The land that I lay down my life for, will never refuse me a welcome.'"

The Sergeant swelled with pride at the noble burst of oratory in which

he had indulged, whilst the two brothers and the other youth appeared greatly to admire his eloquence, and beat their applause very noisily, and very protractedly, upon the table.

"Let us have a song, gentleman," cried the Sergeant, "something that I know in honor and praise of a soldier's life.."

"Bravo! Bravo!" answered the youth, "I'll sing for one,—what is it?"

The Sergeant said the words over, and then he and his pupil started at the top of their voices, shouting a merry song, the purport of which was, that they would go to foreign countries, and leave their peaceful homes in England, to fight the enemy; that they would risk life and limb, and that many years would have passed over their heads before they again saw the quiet scenes of England. At this part of the melody, the mother of the youth leaned her head against the wall; a clay-like whiteness came over her whole aspect; she appeared ready to faint away, and fall to the ground. The youth, perceiving this, went (as well as he was able, for the ale had had a potent effect upon him,) to his mother's side, to cheer her up, and offer her some water to drink. As soon as he came near her, she seemed to brighten up;—a gleam of sunshine came over her previously clouded brow, and a smile played round her thin and blue lips.

The boy looked at her for some moments, and then he put his hand into her's, and said softly, "I wish I hadn't come in; and if I could manage it I'd run away." The pensive looking young man, whom I have already mentioned, seemed very indignant at such a remark, and his sense of honor made him speak, although his pity for the woman would otherwise have restrained him.

"What a mean spirited fellow you are!" he cried aloud, "after you have taken money, and been entered, then to say that you'd try to run away; pretty fellow you are for a soldier,—why it'll disgrace our colours to have you serving beneath them."

The woman looked angrily at the young man;—

"Ah! you're the kind of persons to make others wretched! when they can get their children to do what they wish at last, they persuade them against it."

"I did no more about him than I would have people to do in my own case. When I had once given my word that I'd follow the camp, and had taken the money, and the drink, (as the boy has,) nothing on earth should induce me to try and escape out of my own contract."

"It's very fine talking in that way, young man, but if you had the temptation offered to you, and the inclination to leave, your fine resolution wouldn't hinder you."

"I declare," said he, "they would,—when I had once given my word, and pledged myself, no selfish consideration should ever weigh with me. I'd spurn the thought of ever wavering in that manner."

As he ended his sentence, and leant back in his chair, the door of the village ale-house was partially and gently opened.

"Who is there?" enquired the Sergeant,—“pray walk in, there is capital feasting to be had here, and glory to be gained,—so walk in.”

He hurried to the door, and opened it wide, expecting to behold some rustic youth, lured by the sound of melody, so unusual in his country village, and yet withheld by his modesty from entering within a place where he expected so many to be assembled.

Great was his surprise, (for he had generally found women who sought those they loved at such houses, rush with a hurried and anxiously-hasty step,)—great was his surprise to see a pale and delicate young woman.

"What do you want, my love?" he asked,—“If you're in want of a sweetheart, come in, for here are just the fellows for you; full of life and spirit.”

"Is Hector Cuthbertson here, pray, Sir?"

"Oh, no!" answered the Sergeant, for he wished to disguise the truth, disliking to witness such scenes as I have been describing, and being solicitous that the present applicant should depart without further trouble.

"Is he *not* here?" she asked, and raised her voice, from her fears as she spoke the words. The pensive looking young man started from his seat, and hastened forwards.

"Come back! come back!" cried the Sergeant, "you must not go outside the door."

"Why not, Sir?" enquired the young man, "what right have you to keep me back; and what harm can there be in my going outside the door?"

"Why a great deal, I can tell you, my good fellow; I know the evil of letting my men once get away, for it's not such an easy job to get them back again."

"Do you think I would be mean enough to desert?"

"I never think anything; it's too much trouble for a soldier to do so. It's enough for him to brave the enemy, and lay down his life for his country, without afterwards working his head with fancies, and all that."

"I *must* go out, for Catherine will not come within this place, I am sure."

"Well! then, I'll tell you what I'll do," said the Sergeant, "I'll come out too, and stand here to see you that you don't make off."

The young man looked as if disgusted at the bare idea.

"How can you expect me to stand and talk to my wife, with you close by to listen to every word I say?"

"Oh! it's your *wife*, is it?" said the Sergeant, laughing, "I'm not afraid!—you may go out in safety."

"What do you mean?" interrupted the other, fiercely, "do you presume to doubt my love for my wife?"

"Why, as to that, I don't mean you as yourself,—as one may say,—but as an example of the species. I have heard of many men running away

with their sweethearts, (and natural enough too,) but I never heard of a man running away with his wife."

The husband did not stop to hold any more parley with one whom he considered unworthy of his attention, but ran to the spot where his anxious wife was standing outside, and straining her eyes to see what was taking place in the room.

The appearance of the young woman had touched me with compassion the first moment I saw her. There was much of sweetness of character, much of fear and timidity, and much of fond affection in her demeanour, for which I greatly admired her, and I felt assured that she was one of those of whom the words might well be spoken,

"Happy the man who calleth her wife."

I made up my mind that I would know wherefore her husband sought to leave her in cold and cheerless solitude, and go far away from his native country with a marching regiment.

"I will go and speak to the couple without," I said, addressing the Sergeant.

"A glass to our better acquaintance, Sir," he answered "even if we never meet again."

Notwithstanding my polite rejection of this friendly offer, I managed to get a place in the Sergeant's good graces.

The elderly woman took advantage of the permission which he had granted to the young man to withdraw, to urge that she also might have some private conversation with her boy, on the grass plot in front of the ale-house.

There was, however, that look in her eye which told the shrewd officer too plainly what was her intention; and he winked knowingly at me as he said,

"No, no;—I'm very sorry to disoblige you, but mothers are queer customers to deal with. If they're ever so old, and not able to move a leg, they manage to walk off with their children, to get them out of 'harm's way,' as they say.—It mustn't be allowed; it's acting contrary to all law and right, to allow children to go with their mothers;—it *mustn't* be."

"One word, Sir, only one word."

"No, no, ma'am, I say again. I know well enough what that word would be—'Run'—that's the word—quite an unfit word for a soldier's ear;—not proper by any means, nor suitable for a brave man."

The poor woman sat down in one corner, and spoke not another word. She found it vain any longer to attempt to induce the Sergeant to give her the permission she so much desired, and she now determined to sit still and watch her son with the intense observation of a parent's love, until the newly enlisted troops were ordered to set out on their first march. I left her for a time in her sorrow, and went out of the house.

The fond ones whom I now sought, (in order that I might speak to the man,) were standing close to one another in deep and earnest conversation. I felt ashamed to draw near to them, lest they might peradventure fancy me impelled so to do by idle and impertinent curiosity to overhear what they were discoursing. I resolved, however, that I would not be kept back by the fear of my motive being misinterpreted, and therefore I approached them, (taking due care that I would place myself so that I should be plainly seen by them, and prevent their talking loud enough for me to hear, if they objected to my so doing;) and I waited until there should be a pause in their dialogue, when I could speak.

"And you wish then to leave me?"

"*Wish* to leave you, Catherine! How can you think so?"

"Have I not cause? are you not about to go?"

"I am. I have already enlisted, as you know; but no one knows the pain and grief which it costs me to quit you. It unmans me even to think of it."

"And when shall you return to your own village again?"

"I have not the least idea: It may be months or years; I have no power to say when I shall come back again. I now serve the Queen, and of course I am not master of my own movements in any way."

"And what could induce you to make up your mind to leave me to starve alone? is it not most cruel? When you are near me, you can see that I get taken care of, but you prefer to go where you can live well and look grandly yourself, and forget her who wants the means of supporting herself in any manner."

"I care nothing for my own good eating and drinking;—from my heart I despise the man who values such a thing a straw; a piece of bread and a drink of water are enough for a man if his heart is contented and his mind at rest. And as to wearing smart clothes and a great sword, I'm not such a boy as to care about such nonsense."

"Then what could make you enlist?"

"It was for your sake, Catherine, and for your sake alone. You look as if you don't believe me; yet, strange as you may think it, Catherine, it was that, and that only, which led me to the course I have pursued."

"You are making fun of me, Hubert, and at such a time too!"

"Making fun!—I was never more sad and miserable in my life than I am at this moment. I will tell you how it is for your sake that I have taken my present step. You know well enough how poor we have been—driven to the last shifts to get the least morsel of food, and forced to part with our bedding and furniture, (such as it was) to satisfy nature's cravings. You know how you have asked for help as well as I! and you know what your answer has been from those you asked,—'you have a young and hearty husband, let him maintain you! As long as you have him to take care of you, you mustn't expect anything from us!' This

has always been the reply, and you can testify how, all the time that you have been so spoken to, that husband, to whom they have alluded, has been willing to do the meanest and commonest work, the lowest drudgery, to gain you meat and raiment. You can attest, too, that that man was born with a proud and high spirit—that he, as well as you, once moved in as high a rank as those who now deny the sought-for aid, and that the boon he has sought, sought incessantly, is such an one as, had he been single, he would have died ere he stooped to ask. When the recruiting Sergeant came to the village, I thought to myself that I would come and enter with him, that I would leave my wife in the poor little cottage at home, that I would go with the army to distant countries, however remote, and brave the enemy, however fierce.”

“Strange, then, that such an idea should have entered your mind, when you had always cared only for that wife, whom now you are about to leave to starve.”

“Oh no! that was far from my intention—very, very far—I thought that for me to go was the only way to get my wife friends, and to have any care shown to her. When I was away, people would know that there was no one to aid you, and then they would not turn you from their doors. But, while your husband was with you,—a nominal supporter, (for he is none in fact, to whom the opportunity to gain a living is denied,) I was sure that you might be left to die for want of food and warmth. It was, I knew, the only way for your good—the only possible thing which I could think of for your benefit (and so I made up my mind to it, and a bitter and a hard struggle was it before I could fully resolve on it) to leave you for foreign lands and battle-fields.”

“Yes, but you will leave me then, to endure miseries worse than starvation—the pangs of a broken heart and a blighted hope. You will leave me to sit in solitude, and weep over hours too dear for memory to dwell upon without maddening me by the recollection: you will leave me to water my bread with the tears of ceaseless sorrow, and to find the coldness of neglect more bitter than the frost and snow. You thought to serve me by quitting me! and you will pierce me with arrows more sharp than those which the ruthless enemy can aim against you. You will plunge me into misery deeper than the troubled waves which will threaten to overwhelm you as you pass from your native land to foreign and distant shores.”

“Cheer up, Catherine, dear Catherine, and do not seek to move me from my purpose: it is too late now; I am enlisted—I cannot draw back again.”

“Farewell, then, *for ever*, my dearest Hector, you will see me no more. You may live to return victorious from the wars; to bring back with you the laurels of victory; and the means which will enable you to live in competence and ease in a comfortable home; but as to the wife whom you swore to abide by, alike in riches and in poverty, in health and in sickness, in honour and dishonour, she will have faded away and left no

M

record of her brief and stricken existence. When you enquire (if, peradventure, loaded, as you then may be, with gold, and ennobled with glory, you deign to enquire about her who once shared the crust of bread and the draught of water with you, and felt happy in your smile; you will be directed to the humble daisy which will then be the only mark upon the grass-covered mound, to point out the resting-place of her, whose life was but as a troubled dream."

"Say not so, dearest Catherine, the very words you say, cut me through like the sharpest sword—I'll never enter into such a service, and leave you with such an idea as that before my view. No, I'll stay and earn my bread in the meanest, lowest way with you, or if I fail in doing so, I will sit down and starve by your side."

"Alas! what is now the use of talking thus, Hector: it is vain to say you will not enter, when you have already taken the pay and enlisted yourself in the army."

"But I will not go with this sergeant—this boasting prating fellow. I'll go back and throw down his money to him, and quit him for ever. I had half repented ere you came in, and now I hate the thought of what I have done, and the cruelty of which I have been guilty, in dreaming of parting from you."

"But alas! dear Hector, he will not take your money again, and you cannot be free. You know how anxious they are now to get soldiers, and how loath they are to part with any whom they have once procured. The Sergeant cannot fail to see in your figure and whole appearance, what a prize he has obtained in enlisting one so full of manly strength and of manly courage and fire. If you go in to speak to him, he will only look sharply to see that you do not quit the ranks which you have lately entered."

"Then I will hasten with you, Catherine, and leave this place; if we run as fast as our limbs can carry us, we shall elude the officer, if he pursue us; and very likely he will not do so for a long time, as he is making himself comfortable within by taking his fill of the ale."

The wife was overjoyed at the project of her husband: such had been her anxious wish from the moment she found that Hector had enlisted. She accordingly took his arm, (delight beaming in her eye,) and was about to rush with him from the scene of enlistment,—when I drew near: I was loath to impede the flight of the soldier, (for such had Hector now become,) but yet I felt that duty impelled me to do so. I should have been sorry—deeply sorry, for the young woman's sake, that her husband should quit her and go to foreign countries, perhaps not to be heard of for months, for years, or even for ever. Yet I could not connive at a fraud, and allow a man who had received a sum of money for one specific purpose, to appropriate that money without fulfilling his engagements.

I drew near to him. "Do you not remember how indignant you felt, a very short time since, at another person, because he would have decamped

after entering the service? and how you declared that nothing on earth should induce you to imitate such an example?"

Hector hung down his head, and answered not a single word.—

"You *must not* go," I continued, "I will never allow a deserter to defraud his country and disgrace the service, whilst I can prevent it. I should have been glad to have seen you in your cottage, without a thought of leaving your wife—but having once determined on doing so, and enlisted in the army, I cannot tolerate your departing, even for the sake of your wife, from your new line of duty."

"Pray, Sir," said Catherine, wildly, and raising her voice in her passionate excitement—"for the sake of those dear to yourself, do not interfere to take my husband away from me! you will cause my death if you do, for my poor heart will quickly break! What pleasure can it give to you to cause such misery to a poor and helpless woman? I do not ask any gift from your kindness, although I am hungry and weary—without a bed to sleep upon, and with scarce sufficient clothing to cover me—but I do pray you for the love of mercy, not to blight the only hope which yet remains to me, and take from my fond arms and tender care, the husband whose presence is my life, and for whose sake I would be happy to die. Do not, I entreat you, I implore you, I beseech you upon my knees!"

The excitement of the speaker had caused her to raise her voice to such a pitch that the sound of it was heard by those within the building, and caused the Sergeant to issue forth. I was well pleased (although I felt for the poor woman's grief) that he thus came, for it saved me a most unpleasant task—that of being an informer against the repenting man, and the cause of distress and sorrow to his troubled and affectionate wife. It is nevertheless true, that in very deed, I was the cause of the officer now appearing; for my conversation with the woman had made her reply in so raised a tone; but still, I did not seem to be placed in so odious a light as I should have been had I actually informed the Sergeant of the intended flight of his newly enlisted soldier.

"So, so! Mr. Story-teller," said the Sergeant, addressing the young man, "you're a pretty kind of a fellow, ar'n't you? Half an hour ago, it was, 'Oh! I wouldn't desert for the whole world! I should spurn the thought of it!' and now, it's 'I'm off like a shot, if I can only get away without being seen!' That's all very fine, but it won't do with me; I'm too wise for all that, I can tell you—why, what in all the world has come over you?"

"Look there," said the young man, pointing towards his wife as he uttered the words, and hanging his head in conscious guilt.

"Look there," answered the Sergeant—"well, what of that? I saw your wife long ago; it's no novelty to me to see her again."

"She begged me to stay with her, and I could not refuse."

"More fool you! Why, my lad! if I had a wife, I would refuse her



everything she asked of me. There's no comfort in the marriage state without it."

The poor woman had come close to her husband's side, and was pressing his hand in unutterable anguish. The man of war looked towards him and exclaimed—

"Come, come away, my good fellow: let's have no more of this love-nonsense—it's all very well for a few minutes, but it doesn't do for a continuance. Come, walk in again."

The wife was about to enter with the rest of the party, but the Sergeant interfered, and requested that she would depart.

She vehemently entreated that she might be admitted, but he as strenuously forbade her to do so.

During the absorbing interest which this scene produced in the mind of the Sergeant, there were others who promptly and gladly took advantage of the pre-occupation of his attention.—Suddenly a loud call was made by the landlord, who was a great patron of all who could afford and would agree to spend.

"Hollo! Master, look there—there's another of them making off—look sharp."

The Sergeant turned briskly round, and at the very corner of the house beheld the elderly woman running faster than one would have supposed possible, and dragging along with her her intoxicated son. He could *run* well, for inebriated people can always do so better than they can walk. He

was in that state of stupefaction from drink, that he was equally willing to go or to stay; so that his Mother found it no difficult matter to prevail upon him, whilst the thoughts of him whom she feared, were quite diverted away from them, to flee from the scene of her recent sad sorrows.

"Ah, well!" said the Sergeant, "I do think there's no end to my troubles! Once let me get all these fellows together again, and I'll take care they shan't escape me a second time. I'll run after this young chap and fetch him back."

He started on his race, but very soon returned:

"What shall I do! while I am after one, the other will be off. Will you, Sir, keep a look out for me, on the man, while I follow the boy? I'm very sorry to trouble you; but I'm a soldier, and must run away, Sir; it's my duty to do so."

I could not refuse the request, unpleasant as was the performance of it. After receiving money from the Queen's representative, it was a violation of all duty to attempt to escape the conditions on which that money was advanced to them. I accordingly agreed to keep guard whilst the officer pursued the tipsy boy. I presumed that he was accustomed to such flights, for he went with immense speed, and ere I thought that he could be at the distance of even a few yards from me, I could see him get to the end of the lane in which the public-house was situated.

Five minutes had hardly elapsed before I saw the victor returning with his captive, and the weeping mother of the latter walking behind them with slow and measured steps. They came up to us.—

"Now, my lads," said the Sergeant, "we'll start, if you please; we've had quite enough of these doings. I have no fancy for any more runs.—A man might as well have no breath at all, as have it taken out of his body in this way."

He then desired the musical performer to commence playing a March, and the obedient servant struck up a very lively martial air, and led the way for the others to follow him.

"In front of me, gentlemen, if you please—betters first always, you know."

The Brothers, who found life and pleasure in all things, and unusual merriment in their newly acquired profession, willingly followed the musician: they were full of fun, and not a little proud of their flaunting ribands. Who was to succeed them?

"You two who wished to run,—you next, if you please."

"We will go too," said the women at once.

"No followers allowed," answered the Sergeant laughing, "go back."

The musician played merrily, and the young man caught the hand of the boy and moved forward.

"My son! my son!" exclaimed the old woman, "the only hope of my old age!" and she burst into an agony of tears.

The younger female seized hold of her husband, and entreated him for the love he bore her, to stay with her. She told him she should be dead ere many days were over, and that her heart was then bursting in her bosom. He said not a word; but bit his whitened lip, and clenched his clay-cold hand.

"Play up," said the Sergeant, taking the arm of Daniel Franklin."

The old woman's voice burst out in such wailings as once heard are never forgotten. The younger female leaned against a tree to support her fainting limbs—and to the sound of a lively march, the recruits proceeded.

I stood fixedly for some time, and stared after the advancing party; and as I did so, I could not help thinking how different the outward appearance often is from the inward reality. It is a gladsome sight to see the brave soldiery going off to the wars, and it is a cheerful thing to behold the newly entered recruits marching with spirit to commence their courageous and patriotic duties. But how many breaking and ruined hearts does every regiment leave behind it! how many does each recruiting party consign to sadness and solitude!

How many a pained and sorrow-stricken breast, even amongst the warriors themselves, affects a gladness which it does not feel! and how many an aching head and troubled brain is to be met with beneath the hat which bears the bright ribands marking the newly enlisted recruit.

I doubt not, my readers have often felt, if ever they have directed their thoughts to the subject, whilst martial music has sounded and gay banners sported in the air, as a Regiment advanced to the battlefield, that a far different scene would be presented to their view could they penetrate to the houses which the soldiery had quitted: that many pallid cheeks and tearful eyes were there to be beheld, and that the very bitterness of grief was spreading there its desolating influence. But perhaps not many of my Readers have ever considered how sad is often the heart of him who brandishes his weapon and shouts for the fight,—how his wife and his children, soon, it may be, to be widowed and fatherless, are in his thoughts, crushing every other feeling beneath them—and how, whilst he seeks the enemy, he would fain, (though not from lack of courage,) bend back his footsteps to his village home.

Again; if they have observed a recruiting party following their Sergeant, my readers will, I am sure, have judged that many saddened parents, and children, and many a devoted wife, were mourning for those to whom the Sergeant was speaking as such "jovial and happy fellows." But I question if my readers have fancied how various and sorrowful were the feelings of the newly-enlisted themselves. Numbers of these men have joined in a moment of excitement, caused by the language of the officer, and the drink by which it is accompanied; but, as soon as that excitement has passed away, bitter have been their regrets, and unavailing their remorse.

Several others who have entered with soberness and steadiness, for the sake of relieving aged parents from the expense of supporting them, or for some equally good reason, have found their hearts well-nigh breaking as their village steeple has faded from their lingering view.

Such were some of my thoughts as I looked after the party of which young Franklin formed a member. I came to the public-house on purpose to ascertain the fate of this man, and I had been so much more interested in others, when I arrived at the place whither I had followed him, that I had forgotten, until he had left the village, to give one thought to him. He had no mother present to hang upon his neck in fond, sweet tenderness,—no wife to heave a bitter sigh for him as he bade farewell; his relations were hidden from my view, and the grief of which I had been a witness, had had the power to make me forget the less striking, but not the less real, sorrow, which was unapparent. As soon as I remembered the object of my errand, I blamed myself for my forgetfulness, and turned my steps towards the cottage of old Mary Franklin.

As I arrived at the cottage, Mary met me at the door. A pleasant smile, such as I had not before seen one shadow of, caught my eye, depicted on her countenance. The younger brother of Daniel also showed signs of the delight which he experienced. I wondered to see this appearance of happiness, and supposed (although from the state of the village in which they dwelt, I could hardly credit that such was the fact,) that some improvement had taken place in their circumstances during my absence. Perhaps some stranger to the village had called and left the means which they had previously so grievously lacked, to buy nourishing food and comfortable clothing. I had heard too much of the characters of the great men of the district, to imagine for a second that they had come as messengers of mercy to the widow's dwelling; but it was possible that some gentleman from another part, had found his way to this rustic locality, to cheer the heart of the sorrowful.

I could not, then, but feel a glow of satisfaction as I drew near to speak to Mary. I fancied to myself that I should hear from her lips a very different tale from that which they had not long before uttered. He is a bad man, whoever he may be—it matters not whether he sit upon a kingly throne, or rest upon the bare ground—who does not rejoice to see that others have received some comfort in their time of woe, and are feeling some cessation of the misery they before sustained. Every man has his errors, and, however much we may regret that such should be the case, we can tolerate the offences of another, so long as he shows sympathy and compassion for his fellows; but when the milk of human kindness seems to be dried up in his bosom, and the pulse that beats at another's joy has grown still and dead within him, we feel no mercy for the heartless one, and turn away from him, in disgust, to other offenders whose faults are of a different character.

"Well, Mary, I am glad to see you looking more happy than when I parted from you. You were then very wretched, but now there's a smile of pleasure on your cheek, and a brightness in your eye. It's always a joy to me to see *any one* looking more contented, and particularly any person about whom I have felt interested, as I have done about you."

Mary curtsied, and a look of satisfaction was diffused over her countenance.

"Well?" I continued, "then you really *are* gratified about something."

"I hope I have reason to be, Sir," answered Mary Franklin.

"It is evident," said I to myself, "that even in this place, where I thought there were no friends to the poor, Mary has found one. It would be wrong to judge a whole district by *instances*, however numerous they may be. I hope," I now turned again to Mary, "that you have reason to be glad; and I willingly suppose that you have."

Her look grew even livelier than before, and I longed to hear her account.

"Proceed with your story, Mary."

"Proceed with my story, Sir? Why, I have nothing fresh to tell you. I have been at home ever since you left me, and nobody has spoken to me, except my little boy. It's not likely, indeed, Sir, that any one would."

"I cannot believe you, Mary; I am willing to take your word generally, but I am sure, now, that you are deceiving me for a time, to surprise me at last with your good news."

"If I had any good to tell you, Sir, I would do it in a minute, but it's no use for me to tell a lie, and pretend to know something when I do not."

"Then, why, may I ask you, is your appearance altered so much? One time I call upon you, and you look as if you were breaking your heart; the next time I come, you are smiling, and looking quite happy. There must be some cause for this, and I wish you would explain to me what it is."

"The cause of my smile, Sir, must be known to you. I believed that you had come to bring me good tidings, and so I seemed as pleased as I felt. You know, Sir, what a love I have for my eldest boy; (I have for my youngest, too, Sir, bless him; but I am speaking of my Daniel at present,) and how sad I have been—it has been my worst grief—to see how he had tried for work, and for friends, and has always been refused. What is more bad than all, Sir, to see how hard and rough he has now got, that he doesn't care to ask for the work, or to give any one a civil answer that speaks to him. Well, Sir, you came to see me, and I thought it was very kind of you; but I thought nothing so kind as to see how you spoke to the lad. I felt sure that you had made up your mind to be a friend to him, and in that way you would be the best friend to me, for I care more for him than for myself, by a great deal. When I saw him, Sir, get up all of a sudden and leave the cottage, I thought at once that he had made up his mind, from what you had said, to try again, with civility,

if he could not find something to earn an honest living by. And when you went after him so sharp, I made up my mind, for certain, that it was so, and that you knew it, and had gone out to aid him, and would come back again in a short time and let me know, (for interest goes a great way, and I was sure a gentleman like you would have some,) what a nice birth he had got, and how pleased he was to get it, and how he would always come home of an evening with his money to buy us some food, and make us comfortable; and what I cared about still more, how cheerful he would be, because he had got the means of living respectable, and in an honest way. I was quite sure that such was the case, and I still am sure, Sir; so pray tell me at once what place you have got for him, and when I shall see him back to hear from his own mouth all about it."

"I wish from my heart that I had any such news to give you, but I have not."

I turned away, for I was anxious to drop a conversation which imposed upon me so disagreeable and distressing an office. Mary Franklin, however, still had hopes, and she continued—

"But he *did* go out, Sir, to try and get employed; did he not?"

"Oh! yes, he did;—of course he did; that was the reason of his leaving in that quick way."

"I said so; and you were kind enough to follow him, for the sake of trying to aid him in his efforts, and to see where he had gone?"

"That was the object for which I went. I felt interested in your welfare, and that of your children, and it was to try and benefit you all that I hastened after your son, upon his running from the cottage as he did."

"Did not I say so? You have seen him too, Sir, I am sure you have?"

"Yes, I have been with him, and for nearly the whole time since I quitted you."

"I am sorry to keep asking you questions, Sir. I am afraid I am tiring out your patience; but I will only ask you two or three more, Sir, and then I'll not trouble you any more.—Has my boy got the employment which he went to look for? Has he got anything to support himself by?"

"Oh yes! he is now engaged, and he is in that line which he went out expressly to look after, and which he wished to enter into."

"Oh Sir!" cried Mary, "I am so grateful for this; and, once more, Sir, when shall I see my dear, dear boy again, to clasp him to my arms?"

"That I cannot tell."

"Will it be to-night, Sir, or to-morrow?"

"Not so soon."

"How long, Sir, pray tell me?"

"It may be months or years.—I know not."

"Oh! what then?"—cried the old woman, starting from her seat—
"what *has* he entered into?"

"He has entered into the army—into a marching regiment."

"Oh! do not say so. I cannot, I cannot believe it! He has got cold and callous I know, but I do not believe he would pain me by doing such a thing as that. He knows how fond I have been always of him, and that his going away as a soldier would break my heart."

"I suppose that hearing the Sergeant passing through the village, with the music and the gaiety which always accompanies it, he has been overcome by the grandeur and the liveliness, and has been induced to enlist."

"Did the recruiting party, then, come through the village?"

"Oh! yes, and they have now very recently left it, accompanied by your son, and several others whom they have prevailed on to join them."

"Only just gone? Then I'll go after him, and at any rate bid him a long good-bye, and give him a parting blessing."

So saying, the woman, with an agitated manner, and a hurried step, proceeded to take the hand of her younger son, and was about to sally forth from the cottage in quest of her first-born.

"I fear you will not be able, with all the resolution and courage you may summon up, to part with your son for so long a period as he may perhaps be absent from you."

"I cannot think, Sir, for a minute, of my boy being at a distance that I can follow him, without my doing so. It is a hard struggle, indeed, but I'll summon up courage to bear it."

"I will go with you, then. I can show you the exact course the Sergeant took, and when you have found them I will be near, to see how you bear up against your grief."

We left the door together, and as we proceeded on our way, it was indeed a mournful journey which we took. The poor woman never raised her eyes from the ground; she walked on without noticing any gentleman whom we met; (for there were many in the vicinity, although not in the village itself). I am convinced that had there been a gentleman whose constant habit it was to look after people, and put things to rights for them,—and had he looked at Mary Franklin, he would have failed to discover the grief which was rankling in her heart, and poisoning her life.

"You bear up well," said I presently to her.

"Oh! yes, Sir," she answered, "I am now quite fixed and firm; nothing will change or turn me now. I have made up my mind not to give way to my feelings."

We had hardly ended this brief dialogue, when I observed Mary's cheek grow brighter in its tint, and her eyes sparkled with a vivacity of which I could not have conceived them capable. She had caught the sound of the music which accompanied the Sergeant, and consequently her son also. She looked at me earnestly, and said, "Oh! did you hear that? Let us make haste on, that I may see my dear, dear boy again. When I once see him I will never part with him again, for I love him better than all the

world besides." I soon perceived, (what, in fact, I was pretty well aware of before,) how vain are promises of coldness and calmness from a mother, when she has before her the expectation of beholding a beloved son.

On now we hurried ; no roughness of road impeded us ;—no obstacle of any kind was sufficiently powerful to retard us. Judge, then, my surprise, when all of a sudden, in the midst of this rapid and violent career, I beheld Mary stop short, and turn round towards the village whence we had set out. I was half tempted to surmise that the reason of the poor woman had failed under the shock of losing her cherished son.

"What is the meaning of this?" I said to her, "one minute you are all anxiety to reach your child, and the next you are turning to go back without ever gladdening your eyes with a sight of him. I am quite at a loss to understand you."

"Is it not better, Sir," she answered, "for me to go back than to see him, and then have the misery to go home without him? It will make a second parting, which I am not able to stand up against. I have made up my mind. I will at once give up the thought of seeing him, since it would only make me doubly wretched."

"But do not despair, and return in that way. Your son may return with you. How delightful will that be to you, to carry him back with you, when you feared he had left you for years, or perhaps for ever!"

"It would—it would," said Mary, clapping her hands with glee, like a very child, "it would indeed be delightful. But how can it be done? The Sergeant will not let him leave, after he has entered, and taken the money, and all that."

"I know that he wouldn't ; but I still think that it might be done. I would pay for a substitute for him, equally efficient, and then the Sergeant would not object to allow him to depart. There are young men to be found ready to go into the army, who leave no weeping and broken-hearted mothers behind them ; among such I will gain a substitute for your son, and he shall accompany you to your home, to gladden with his presence the humble dwelling that would appear so sad an one, too, without him."

"I am very much obliged to you, I assure you, Sir," answered Mary again, "for taking such care of a perfect stranger ; but I would rather decline your kindness."

"Why—what in the name of wonder has come over you? I flattered myself that this, at least, was such an offer as you would not have refused ; to have your son again with you, was what you were wishing for above all things in the world, and now, when you may have him, you reject him, and will go back alone."

"It is for this cause, Sir, that I do so ; when I returned with him, I

should find no gentleman in the village willing to take the least notice of him, or give him one day's work, and I should have to go on seeing my poor boy looking more and more wretched and miserable, and growing every day more sullen and uncouth, because of such treatment, and ready to kill himself almost from the usage he received. I beg, Sir, to decline the offer altogether, gratefully, but decidedly."

At that moment the mind of the woman had drawn two pictures; the one, of her son as she had known him in days long gone by; the other, as she had recently seen him, sad, blighted and rejected. And with this mental view before her, she had come to the resolution which I have just mentioned.

My reader will, I am sure, feel indebted to me if I here leave for a short time, my own dull and tame prose, and quote from a beautiful poem by one who charmed us for years with her ever sweet and pathetic strains, and who left the country of her birth and her affections to find nothing but a grave on a foreign and miserable shore—the delight of all civilized Europe, who thus soon ended her voluntary exile in Africa.

In the mind, then, of the woman whose son had enlisted, as I have described; there were two portraits—the first,

"A face of perfect beauty, but it had
A most bewildering smile.—There was a glance
Of such arch playfulness and innocence,
That as you look'd, a pleasant feeling came
Over the heart, as when you hear a sound
Of cheerful music.

His light step seemed
Bounding upon the air, with all the life—
The buoyant life of one untouch'd by sorrow.

There was another—drawn in after years :—
The face was young still ; but its happy look
Was gone ; the cheek had lost its colour and
The lip its smile ;—the light that once had played
Like sunshine in those eyes, was quench'd and dim,
For tears had wasted it.

Upon his thin pale hand
His head was bent, as if in pain—no trace
Was left of that sweet gaiety, which once
Seem'd as if grief could darken not—as care
Would pass and leave behind no memory.
Tears wrung from very bitterness, and sighs
That waste the breath of life—these all were his
Whose image was before her."

I could not but see the justice of the woman's reasoning, for I was convinced, from what I had seen and heard at her cottage, that, had her son been released from his newly acquired bondage, he would but have gone back to a life of idleness and discontent, whilst, in serving her Majesty, he might gain a spirit of respectability and honour, which would render his life pleasant and profitable; whilst his mother, as time rolled on, might cease to mourn over her son, from the hope that he was fulfilling his duty to his Sovereign and his Country, and was finding in service a contentment which he had not experienced in inactivity.

I walked back with her, therefore, to the village, and as I did so I resolved more firmly than before to inspect the state of another of the houses there, then the school, and finally the workhouse. I felt well assured that matters were ill-conducted in the district, but till I had *fully* informed myself on the subject, I would not affirm it to others. I had had so unpleasing, although so very small an acquaintance with the cottages in the village, that I could not muster up courage again to enter one of them. There was such a look of squalid misery,—such an unclean and damp atmosphere about them,—such a gloomy darkness, that the idea of beholding them again was repulsive. I determined, accordingly, that I would not revisit them, but bend my steps to a place which I had noticed on one or two previous occasions. There was so little to remark in the village, the monotony was so great, that it was no marvel if anything (which might never have been observed in a livelier or more varied region) struck and arrested the attention there. Perhaps that which in this poor neighbourhood was looked upon as a subject of interest and importance, in any place more gay and more happy would have been classed amongst the dullest of objects, or would have failed to attract any remark or regard from the passer-by.

The house (if I may dignify with such a name the hovel that had caught my eye) was

THE GENERAL SHOP:

The receptacle from which the rustics supplied themselves with the various articles needed to meet their small wants and humble requirements. I suppose many a month might pass over the heads of the inhabitants without their visiting a town, and it would be difficult therefore to conjecture what they could have done to supply their limited necessities, had it not been for this repository. None of my readers can fail to know from experience what these little shops are like—how full of everything and of all things;—of an assortment unassorted:—a mass rude and undigested, like chaos in the description of the Roman Poet. I say *none* of my readers, for I hope there is not one amongst them so unfortunate as to have been pent up within city walls throughout their whole lives, unable to breathe the soft air, and behold the green fields of the country. That

towards which I bent my steps would have been a true specimen of the shops to which I have alluded, but that it was more dirty, more confined; and more wretched than the generality; yet it was still an example of what they all are, for the fact that it was but half the dimensions of places usually devoted in country parishes to such purposes (as was indeed the case) did not prevent its being a sample of them, only upon a smaller scale than the average: that it was more unswept than any which I had before beheld, and that its contents were even more than generally confused, did not hinder its offering a good resemblance of such marts of trade:—that it was darker than the darkest upon which I had before stumbled (for to such places stumble is an apt and apposite word to be applied) did not impede its being an illustration of the same gloomy subject.

I must, however, attempt something of a description of the identical shop to which my present sketch bears reference. It was, then, a small dark house, with a glass door, some of the panes of which were gone and had left a blank behind, sufficient to admit air enough to blow about, in wild confusion and entire dismay, such of the articles within as were light enough to be moved by a blast of wind. He who entered had to descend one step in order to penetrate within; one small abrupt step, adapted, apparently, for throwing him down, if he came in without due consideration and forethought. A small bell was suspended over the door, which was meant to ring when any person came in; but it seemed likely to be as often useless as useful, for the iron to which it was appended was so crooked and so weak, that it oftentimes caused the bell to hang in a direction far removed from that which was intended. In the window were displayed some pieces of goods fit for making up into dresses for the poor women of the village;—patterns of stars without brilliancy, flowers without beauty, and lines without straightness or correctness. Near to these were clogs of a clumsy make and an ugly shape, suitable for walking through the dirt, but without elasticity or grace; adjoining were placed some hats, such as the rustics might wear upon a Sunday, and in which they might imagine themselves to look well. Such hats indeed have the merit of shining, but, like the vulgar wits whose jokes rest in their coarseness and vulgarity, they shine only because of their inferiority, and by their shining show, to those who are able to distinguish good from bad, that they are not the best of their kind, and the really valuable and true. Hats, light enough to be easily destroyed—heavy enough to press upon the forehead. Near again to these were deposited the various eatables which the vender had to dispose of. There was such butter displayed as needed bread to moisten it, and such bread as required butter to make it digestible. A basin held such treacle as wanted sugar to sweeten it, and a cup contained sugar such as you might have imagined you could have collected by the roadside. There was one bottle containing physic, and there was

another with sweetmeats, and the difficulty was to discern the difference between them. Occasionally a mousetrap was to be seen to catch the hungry mouse who attempted to defraud the poor of the little of which they had to partake. But it would be a hard task, indeed, to say what that window displayed, and harder to say what it did not. It was the place from which the inhabitants of the village were to gain a supply of all their wants, and a remedy for all their evils;—the one shop of the humble hamlet.

I opened the door, which indeed I might almost say opened of itself, for a blast of wind was sufficient to cause it to extend its portals wide before me. A few things were placed upon the counter, much more for the sake of the passers-by who might take a look within, than for the sake of the customers, who were limited in their number and resources. There was a ball of string far too large to tie up any articles that were likely to be there purchased, and placards surrounded me on every side, announcing articles for sale which were never within the walls of "the village shop."

Spiders had made their webs over the drawers which I presumed were intended to hold the money taken, and a look at once of poverty, dirt, and wretchedness was stamped upon all the articles which that shop contained:—a stamp far plainer to be read than the labels which many of them bore.

I entered the shop, but no one was within it: I walked up and down, and endeavoured to make even more noise than my iron heels are accustomed to do, but it was in vain,—no one heard their sound: I knocked with my stick against the ground, but an echo was all the effect which this produced: I struck the bell to which I have before alluded, but no one obeyed the summons.

I called "Shop, shop," but the shop had no living tongue. I pushed about some boxes which were placed upon the floor there, but nothing rose save a cloud of dust, which well-nigh overwhelmed me.

I began to despair of finding anybody, and was thinking of quitting the shop; but I resolved that I would sit down for a short period, and see if any signs of humanity were about to appear; so I took my station upon a box, and patiently tarried in the hope of a coming rescue.

I suppose I had been seated about five minutes, when an inner apartment (which I presume communicated with the upper ones,) was slightly opened, and the figure of a young woman appeared. She took a very careful survey of part of the shop, but as soon as she perceived me she hastily departed again, and all my calling after her was useless. She fled with rapid steps to the rooms above, scared, as it seemed, by the very sight of a stranger.

"Come, come," said I to myself, "keep up your heart; if she does not come again, she will send somebody else." And I resumed my seat upon the box, folded my arms, and hoped for better times. There are very few things more unpleasant than waiting; it is one of the miseries of unsocial

life;—but yet there is one thing which is far worse, and that is quitting any place with an errand or a desire unfulfilled.

My expectations that some one would now arrive were not disappointed. A young man soon came,—he looked into the shop with an air of perfect astonishment that any one should be there, and more particularly that that person should be one of the middle class. He bowed respectfully, but he stared as if he had never before beheld such a thing as myself;—as if a gentleman in such parts were a *lusus naturæ*. I thought I would not interfere with his innocent pleasures; and accordingly I did not broach the motive of my visit, but very resignedly sat still and waited whilst his eyes traversed from my hat to my boots, and then started on a pilgrimage back to the same point whence they had set out. I have observed surprise depicted on many a countenance, but never more obviously than on that of him whose image was now fixed opposite to me in mute wonder. The young man was not very woe-begone in his aspect, (like the generality of those whom I have described,) nor very shabby in his distress. He had the appearance, certainly, of an unpatronized man,—his dress was of a rusty black, and his face had a disquieted, and even dejected look; but he was not such a person as any one would have pointed out as an object of pity, or a subject for pecuniary aid. I am desirous to make this remark, lest my readers should think that I paint with too dark colours, and draw mankind more utterly wretched than I find them. This is far from being the fact. I draw from nature, and not from art; and I sigh to think that there are miseries deeper even than my pen has sketched, and more hopeless, because more hidden from the view even of those who would seek to find them out.

“Did you want anything, Sir?” inquired the young man, with an aspect of bewilderment.

This very simple and natural question perplexed me greatly; for, to tell the truth, I had come in for the sake of gossip with the shopkeeper, and of learning from him the condition of the people of the village; but this was not what I could very well say to a vender of articles, who invariably looks to finding a customer in the person of every one who enters into his house. Had I been disposed to inform him that I wished to know if Mr. Smith resided near him, or to ask the way to some adjoining village, this brief knowledge once gained, I should have had no excuse for further delay, nor, probably, would the disappointed man have been in a humour to communicate any longer with me. I felt that I must, as an introduction to a dialogue, ask him for something in which he dealt, but I really had seen so little appearance of anything for which I had any inclination, that I paused, and hesitated, like a diffident girl.

“I want, I hardly know what, but I want something, and I dare say I shall soon find out what.” “Allow me, Sir,” said the man—the desire to do

business being roused within him,—“allow me to show you what I have and perhaps you will see amongst them some article which you require.” He then spread before me the various goods which he had collected together, and a miserable sight it was; for everything he had purchased was of the commonest and cheapest kind,—such as people with the least means, and the humblest wants, would be likely to buy. “Have you,” I said, anxious to name something first which he had not got, for the sake of making our conversation of a more lengthy character than I could have made it had I at once selected one of the treasures spread before me—“have you such a thing as a silver pencil-case amongst your collection?” “A silver pencil-case! O dear me! no, Sir! that’s an article that’s never asked for in this village.”

“You do not then have many of the wealthy class as purchasers, I presume?”

“I never see one of them by any chance, Sir; it’s the poor people that deal with me, the great ones never think of calling at my little shop.”

“That’s a great pity too; for I think that the gentry ought always to patronize those in their own vicinity; it makes a good feeling between different ranks; and it is, as you know, the duty of mankind to serve one another.”

“The Squire, Sir, and such like, would turn up their noses at the idea of coming in here; they wait until they go into the great town some miles off, where there are fashionable tradesmen to be met with, and of them they get whatever they require.”

“Then I am afraid you do not find business so profitable as you could desire, for the poor of the place cannot, I am sure, afford to spend much, nor often.”

“No, indeed, Sir, they cannot, but what they do buy they always have of me; I sometimes have as many as half a dozen of them in at once of an evening, after it gets dark. That’s the time when they come to me.”

“It’s not the best time, I should suppose; for in order to purchase many articles, such as gowns and shawls, which I see displayed here, a good light is wanted, to see the colours.”

“That’s all very true, Sir, and the women would be glad enough to come in the day-time if they dared, but they are afraid, Sir, and that’s the fact.”

“A afraid!—of what?”

“Why, Sir, they are afraid of being seen to come here.”

“Why, this is a respectable shop; what possible disgrace can there be in any man’s coming into it? Or what objection can any person entertain to seeing another turn in here? Will you oblige me by telling me, for I feel some curiosity to know the reason?”

“It’s easily explained, Sir; you see, if any poor person is seen by the rich ones to come in here, they say directly one to another, Oh! I’m sure that person doesn’t need anything done for him! He *pretends* to be very poorly off, and in great want, and yet he’s able enough to go and buy

whatever he fancies. I'm sure he'll never induce me to attend to him in future, when he comes with his sad tales!"

"No! no! I cannot believe that! Such a low, selfish, unjust view, cannot be taken by the educated and the wealthy; you may, perhaps, *fancy* that such is the fact; but if you come to know the truth, you would own that such ideas never entered the heads of the higher portion of the community."

"Indeed, Sir, it is quite true; and I have every reason to know it, and to be certain that what I say is only what is right and true."

"I must still confess myself unable to believe even what you so positively affirm; probably these persons come so late in the evening because they can then spare the time, but in the day they cannot, from having so much work to attend to."

"I'm sorry to say, Sir, that that is not it. It's little enough they can get to do; they can always find time to go anywhere they wish, without interrupting their employment. I should be pleased, Sir, I can assure you, if that was the case, for I always like to hear of my neighbours going on well, and getting noticed and employed."

"Well, then, I'm sure you must have some certain cause for saying what you do: will you tell me why you think that the poor would not be assisted if the great folks of the parish saw them come into the shop to buy anything?"

"Yes, Sir; and if you please to let me tell you a short anecdote which I recollect, it will do better than my explanations a great deal."

Having expressed my willingness to hear the account which the shop-keeper offered to narrate, he commenced as follows:—

"There's a poor old creature, Sir, in this village, old Molly Hunt. She's lived here, Sir, I don't know how long, and I don't think she does herself: she's seen all the present generation born and married, and she's seen all her own posterity die off in the course of nature. She quite depends upon charity, as one may say, for she has no business to follow, and, if she had, she has not strength enough now to do it. All the children in the village come round her when she goes creeping and crawling about the place, for they all like her, because she speaks kind to them, and takes notice of them, when she happens to fall in with them.

"Those who can afford it, like myself for instance, and the farmers near here, when they come across her path, like, if they have it by them, to give her a penny or so, for her great age.

"Well, Sir, last winter old Molly fell sick, and was not able to be about as before: the children missed her in their rambles, and the poor were sorry not to hear one of the often-repeated tales from her. She was forced to keep indoors for shelter, for a bad cough and cold wearied and wore her very much. It was quite a pleasure to me, amongst others,

to fall in with old Molly, and let her tell her stories of how the village looked seventy years ago, when she was a child ; but now one might wander about all day, and no Molly ever appeared.

“ She was not what people call *ill*, exactly,—that’s to say, she had no disease upon her, but only a cold, like many others ; but her great age made it press very much upon her, and it was for some eight or ten weeks that Molly was confined to her own cottage—a long time for a woman who likes to live out in the open air.

“ Well, after this, Sir, old Molly began to walk about again ; but when any one stopped to speak with her, it was not now the tales of her youth, but of her age, that she was accustomed to detail. She told the farmers how she coughed, but had nothing to stop or to soothe that cough,—and how she often needed something to do her cold good, but she could not afford to buy it. The hearts of the farmers about here are open enough, and they gave her each a penny, or two-pence, as their means would allow. Well, this was quite a blessing for Molly. She thought of what nice stuff she would purchase, which would be sure to relieve her. Well, Molly then made up her mind that she would come down here, and lay out what money she had in some soothing medicine which I sell, and which is, indeed, an excellent cure for all complaints of that kind, and one which I confidently recommend.

“ One morning, Sir, she came creeping to my shop, and I gave her a hearty welcome. ‘ Now, Master,’ says she, ‘ I have got a shilling together in penny-pieces, and I want some of that stuff that’s so good for the cough. It took me some days to collect, but now I’ve got it, and here it is.’ I felt very anxious to bid her keep her money, and to let her have the medicine without a charge ; but I did not know that, situated as I am, I had any right to do so, for I have a wife and children depending upon my exertions, and it’s little enough that I can make for their support. So I told her what I felt, and how she should have had the medicine without money, if I had had the means ; and I gave her the bottle carefully tied up, to protect it from being hurt. Molly told me how hard it was to get a shilling together, but that it was seeing how poorly she was which induced the neighbours to give her the coppers which made it up. Whilst Molly and I were talking together, who should pass by the shop but the great Squire, who is so rich, that he doesn’t know what in all the world to do with his money ; he throws it away upon every trifle, just for the sake of getting rid of the cash, and not because he wants what he buys. He was driving his four-in-hand, and the greys were tossing their handsome heads in the air, in fine style. As the Squire passed by, he threw his eyes, as he always does, into the shop, to see what was going on ; for he likes to know everything about everybody, and if he can find anything to joke about so much the better. I dare say, Sir, you have heard of his jokes ; for he is a funny gentleman, and loves to crack his jests upon the poor, and to have a laugh with his

companions (for his house is often full of his friends) upon the misfortunes of the humble classes. I saw that he seemed struck, directly he came near the shop, with something in it, and I wondered to myself what it could be. I began to think if it was the new hats I had had down from London, or the pictures which I had bought as a cheap lot the last time I



went to the great town. But the Squire certainly *did* stare in ; he bent right forward over his horses, and he stared as hard as his eyes could stare. The carriage went by, and soon after old Molly bade me good day, and toddled off, as fast as her old limbs would carry her, to her poor dwelling, with the stuff which she so much needed, to still her hacking cough, and which it had taken her so long to find the means to raise ; the means which the kindness of those only a trifle better off than herself had procured for her. Poor Molly ! I think I see her now, with the bottle clenched in her thin hand. Molly got the better, however, of that cough which had tormented her for so long, and her health was much as usual ; but her circumstances got worse than ever they were. She really could not get a bit of bread to eat, or a clean bed of straw to lie upon, and she didn't know what would come to her if she didn't soon find somebody who had the power and the will to aid her. She came round calling about upon the farmers and the tradesmen in the neighbourhood, and what they could do for her I believe that they did ; but their means to help her were very small indeed. At last we all told her that she ought to go to the Squire, for he had plenty of money ; and that she really required a little to keep her from starving, and yet that we could not afford to give it her. Molly seemed very reluctant for a long time, but at last she said she would go.

although she felt sure of being driven back again ; and so she went, as she said, but I'm sorry to say that her reception was much what she expected, and not what we hoped.

" If you have been near to the Squire's mansion, Sir, (and I suppose you have, for it's the great show-place of the village,) you will have seen that he doesn't intend the poor ever to come there ; there's a wide space in front, enclosed by rails, and the plat is locked in, so that no one can come within, to go up and knock at the door. There is no bell either, for the poor to ring : the fine servants, in their gold liveries, are always ready looking out for great visitors, because they can afford to make gifts now and then to the lackeys for their attention ; but the poor may go away, if they don't like to wait (on a bitter January morning perhaps) till some grandee may chance to arrive, for the gates to be opened with all respect.

" These are rather hard things, too, Sir, I think, do you not ? For the rich (so I have heard and read) were meant to do good to the poor, who had need of help, and not to those equally well off and prosperous with themselves. But I am going from the story which I began just now to tell you.

" Molly went to the Squire's house, but she was a long time before she could let the servants know that she wished to see their master ; at last, however, they were good enough to take in the message from the poor woman, that she wished to see the Squire. The Squire kept her waiting for an hour or two, (but that she did not wonder at all at,) and then she was ushered into the room where he sat in his glory. But before she got there, what long staircases had she got to go up ! What winding passages to pass along ! What a number of rooms of one kind and another to travel through ! It was enough, as she said afterwards, to take away the courage of any poor woman, to see what state she was being led to, and what a great man it must be who required all this ceremony to be gone through before one could come close and see him.

" The Squire met her with his usual speech to the poor, if they did muster courage enough to come into his presence. ' Well, Ma'am, and what do you want ? ' It would have been a long catalogue for poor Molly to have told to the Squire *all that she did want* ; she, therefore, stood still, and looked miserable, and only curtsied in silent and touching grief. ' Come ! come ! ' said the Squire ; ' what in all the world is the use of this ? You come to me, I suppose, because you need something (for, if not, I don't know for what you can have come to me), and yet, now you are here, you have not got a syllable to say about what has led you hither ! Pray open your mouth, and let me hear a speech from you, without keeping me waiting from other things which I have got to attend to. Pray discourse to me, and make your oration as short as you conveniently can."

" Molly then began to give him an account of the great want which she had of food for her support, and of covering to protect her from the weather ;

of how she had gone to every friend of hers in the village to get a few coppers from them, and of how she had failed to get any, by reason of their own very small means. She described feelingly to him (for so I should think from what she repeated) her utter need of the very smallest assistance to keep her alive. The Squire looked at her, and said, 'Well, Ma'am, have you nothing further to say?' The poor woman thought she had said enough to move anybody, and she had hardly a word to add to her former entreaties; but she stammered out, 'Indeed, Sir, I have nothing more to say than that I have not a morsel of bread, or a penny to buy it with.'

" 'If you want refreshments, you can easily go to a fashionable pastry-cook's and buy them. You will soon find one in the great town a few miles off.' "

" 'Why, Sir, I have never scarce a single copper; how should I manage ever to buy from such a person as that you speak of?' "

" 'Nonsense,' said the Squire; 'did I not see you at the shop in the village laying out your money one day, quite at your ease, and buying every article your fancied? I happened to be driving by, and there I saw you, laying in a pretty stock of all you fancied. It won't do to pretend that you have not got money to waste upon your luxuries.' "

" It was in vain for poor Molly to declare that the article she had bought was only some medicine for herself, when she was very ill, and that she had managed to procure it only by the pennies which her neighbours, only a trifle better off than herself, had been good enough to give her. She assured the Squire of this, but all in vain. The Squire had seen quite enough (although what he saw was but little,) to ground upon it his refusal of Molly's petition. And she left the house with the large tears rolling down her wrinkled cheeks, and heavy sighs coming from her heart. She came back to the shop to tell me what a sad denial she had met with, and to declare that she wished she had never been cured at all of her cough, since the being so had deprived her now of any chance of relief. However, Sir, to tell you the truth, between ourselves, I think that had the Squire not seen Molly here, he would have found some other reason why she ought not to be helped. The will to reject her was there, and he did not hesitate, therefore, to find out the way to do so. I never knew, Sir, a *poor* man, yet, that *wanted* to do a kindness, that did not find out the way, although times were so hard, that he had little enough himself to live upon. In all these matters it is the *will* I look to.

" Of course, in a little village like this, news of any kind very soon spreads; and Molly let all the other poor people in the village know the reception she had met with from the Squire. So soon as the others knew of it, (although they never had at any time got a shilling from the Squire, nor were they likely to get it,) the fear that by possibility they might be re-

fused on account of their buying at the shop, should they ever muster up courage to go and ask the Squire, stopped them from daring to come to me to get anything that they needed. My shop was really deserted; the poor souls were ready to starve at home for want of the articles they could have got from me; and I had thoughts of shutting up my house altogether, and going to some other place, (although I should have been very sorry, as this is my native parish,) to try my fortune there instead.

"A stranger would have thought that I was disliked by the poor, instead of being, as I hope I am, rather a favourite. After a little time, Sir, however, the villagers found that it was no use, and that they must return to me; for they could not, of course, do without food and clothing, and my shop is, as you see, the repository for everything that they require. But now they always come by night,—they are alarmed to be seen in the daylight; but when it is thick and dark they come from their cottages, and creep here, as if they were going after something that was very wrong indeed. I am sure, Sir, if you were to come and sit here all day long and watch for them, from month to month, you would never see a customer except in the evening time, and then you would see them come treading so softly and looking so timid, that you would be astonished. It's the Squire has done it all, Sir, and I can assure you it is a great inconvenience to me, as well as a sad thing upon the poor, who often go without something which they very much need, for many hours, rather than be seen to come here."

The young man stopped, and seemed surprised at himself that he should have run on in his talk to so great a length. The fact was that the subject upon which he spoke was deeply interesting to himself, and that, in speaking upon it, he had forgotten his usual fear and shyness of strangers. He now perceived how long he had been talking, and he began to apologize for the length of time which he had so occupied. He pleaded, in extenuation of his supposed fault, that he was very unaccustomed to see a gentleman, and still more unused to hold conversation with him; moreover, that the matter upon which he had been so eloquent was one which very materially concerned his own means of supporting his wife, and which very greatly affected the condition of the poor, in whom he felt a deep and warm interest; as his shop was the *one shop* for the poor to buy at, while their not coming, except occasionally, injured his business and hindered him from gaining a livelihood. I assured him that apologies were altogether unnecessary, as I fully sympathized with him in his feelings and views upon the subject.

"I have heard," said I, "a good deal about this same worthy Squire, and I have made up my mind that I will get an introduction to him in some manner or other. Everybody who has mentioned him has done so in pretty much the same terms; and I should, in this instance, be inclined to believe the old saying that 'what *everybody* says cannot be wrong.'"

"You will find him a very humorous gentleman, I believe, Sir; that is what report says of him, you know."

"Yes: and rumour adds that his jokes are much more pointed against the lowly than the higher classes. I do not admire that property in him quite so much as I might otherwise do his facetiousness."

"That is his way; his jests are about the poor, and therefore, as you are not one of them, you will lose, I understand, his greatest humour; and so you won't be able to judge entirely, you know, Sir."

"Though I am not myself what is commonly designated a *poor man*, yet I doubt not I shall have opportunities of hearing the Squire's witticisms. I can start the subject of the needy in discoursing with him, or I shall perhaps, if I have the good fortune to get invited to his mansion, be a witness to some of the interviews between the humble and himself. My curiosity having been excited, I must find some method of being made known to him."

"His acquaintance, Sir, is so large with the nobility and gentry round here, that you will, I should think, find no difficulty about it."

I bought some small article of the shopkeeper, in return for the polite manner in which he had been ready to enter into and carry on a conversation with me; and, wishing him more prosperous times and better patronage, I quitted his house, and walked forth once more into the quiet village.

My reader has already been informed to what place I intended my footsteps to be directed after I had finished my interview with the owner of the shop, viz. to

THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL.

I know of no better or surer guide to the manner in which a clergyman discharges the important duties of his office, than a visit to the schools under his pastoral charge. The progressive improvement of his youthful friends is a source of sincere and deep joy to the really virtuous and active minister, whilst to the indolent and the careless it is a subject of perfect and heartless indifference. There is no outward show about such a duty; nothing to fascinate the public eye, and charm the listening ear.

Far different in this respect to preaching, which a man may do eloquently, carefully, and energetically,—and yet only to show the graces of his rhetoric, and the elegance of his action; and the praises of men follow the popular preacher as quickly as the vainest heart can desire.

Yet is there no employment more fitting a teacher of the truth, than to educate the young and humble. A blessing rests upon such efforts for the good of the community; and the results which ensue therefrom are of great value in the eyes of the pious minister.

The whole neighbourhood may ultimately be benefited by such devotion

of time and talent; and the usefulness of him who has been so careful in the bringing up of the poor children committed to his charge may be widely spread.

But for a period, at any rate, the *world* knows not the results of the village school.

They are flowers carried down a silent but lovely stream, which may at length throw them in the pathway of mankind to notice and admire them; but for a time they are borne upon the waters, and men know not of them, nor fancy that what is hidden from their vision will ever be presented in beauty to their gaze.

The village school is a favourite spot with that Shepherd who gently leads the young ones of his flock, and bears them in his tender arms.

But my reader may possibly exclaim, "How can you draw the clergyman of the village you are depicting as so careless of his people, and yet allow that he had a school established in his parish?"

My reply is—that I am not delineating a man who set at nought all propriety of conduct, but who displayed none of that *zeal* which should mark the course of every Minister of the Gospel. A school had been established in the village previous to the gentleman I am now mentioning getting possession of the cure,—and to have suffered that school to fall into utter disuse, and to remain with closed doors, would have drawn down the censure of the Bishop, and called forth the remarks of those with whom the Pastor associated in his daily life. He did as much as he fancied he was compelled to do to appear respectable, but he did no more.

I inquired of the rustics whom I met where the school was situated, and they gave me an explanation which sufficed to lead me to the proper spot. About half a mile from the village the school-house had been erected, in a quiet and shady field. The building was small; and was plain in its architecture, but it was neat in its design. A slanting roof was covered with blue slates, and a row of windows on either side of the edifice let in the light by which the young ones might con their difficult tasks. An inscription was engraven on a stone which was let into the front of the house, to the effect that the structure was raised entirely at the charge of a lady of the district.

How often are similar announcements to be found! How common an occurrence is it for the gentler sex to dedicate alike their wealth, their talents, and their time, to the poorest, the youngest, and the meanest of their fellow-creatures!

A pretty walk was marked out in the field which showed the way to the entrance to the school-house; but weeds and briers now crept over the path which had once been made so neat by the care and taste of the foundress. I wondered, as I began my course along this walk, to see such little signs of animation without; for upon occasions of a similar character I had always *known* that a school was not far distant, from the chil-

P

dren who were straying about in the vicinity, or lolling in front of the portal. As it is necessary children should have their times of relaxation and rest, intermingled with their periods of study and exertion, I could not suppose that this non-appearance of the youngsters marked any more attention to the swift progress of the youthful students, but rather that it showed the attendance at the place of learning was of a very limited extent. I paused when I came to the door, for, as a stranger, I hardly felt at liberty to open it and walk in amongst the teachers and the pupils. I soon perceived that the sound of my footsteps had been heard by those assembled within, for the latch of the door was raised, and a small face peered anxiously out. I took advantage of this to address myself to the owner of the tiny countenance upon which I gazed. No sooner had I said a word than the little boy who had made the survey stepped out from the school-house, and carefully shut the door behind him. He approached me, and looking up very steadily in my eyes, fixed himself at my side, and seemed waiting to hear the communication I might wish to make to him.

As a means of commencing a conversation which might end in my being ushered into the house, (that being the object which I had in view at the time,) I asked my young friend whether he had been long at the school to which I saw that he belonged?

The little boy stared hard at me, and drew nearer and nearer as he found that my tone of voice was gentle, and that I wished to be kind in my manner towards him; but he answered not a single word. I was surprised at this, and used affectionate appellations towards him—but those he had never heard applied to him before, and he could scarcely understand their meaning. I then tried to beguile him into speaking by guessing what was his name, and as I said over the usual Christian names I could see that one of them was his, by the smile in his eye; but he still replied not. He seemed as if he had never been used to be called by his name; rougher words and less friendly terms were those by which it had long been his hard fate to be addressed. The boy walked off to a few yards' distance, and, seating himself upon the ground, he began to devour an apple, which, somehow or other, he had succeeded in obtaining. I thought it no harm to try to make friends, and therefore I again went close to him. But quite wasted were all the energies I devoted to making the boy say something. He was accustomed to be so browbeaten by the grown people, and so unworthily treated by those but a little older than himself, that he could not credit my assurance of wishing his good; or of desiring, as a mark of my good feeling towards him, to make him some present. All would not do: I was conquered—fairly conquered—by a child, and disappointed in my intention of getting an introduction into the school-room. I was half inclined to go away altogether, when I heard, and was arrested by, the sound of a young laugh, coming from the back of the said building.

Thinking I should now get some more communicative companion, I hastened to the spot, and there I found three children, apparently in high glee. They had slipped out, I presumed, from the room, during the time the master was engaged with some others of his pupils, and were now enjoying their relaxation with a zest proportioned to the irksomeness of their former employments. Two little girls and a little boy were there, but their appearance was very dirty, and almost disagreeable. I say *almost*—not quite—disagreeable; for who—in spite of uncleanness, poverty, and woe—who ever saw a child who had not something enticing and attractive about it? If others have done so, I am free to declare that I have not. There is about children something which, in its weakness, its helplessness, and dependence, is most endearing. This is one of the charms which a child has in its own father's eyes, and the feeling, in a degree, extends towards all the young.

"Perhaps," said I to myself (for I am fond of soliloquising before acting), "perhaps the game upon which these children are engaged will furnish me with a subject for some remarks that may please them; and I may then pass on from these observations to others about the school, which may become a medium of my gaining access within its walls."

I drew near to the playfellows; and I hoped and expected to find that some pretty sport engrossed their merry care, some pastime in which, when a boy myself, (in days long past, and far, far happier than these,) I had myself participated.

"The sports of children satisfy the child,"

says the poet, and I am baby enough to own that I think some of them so amusing and so agreeable, that the grown man, as well as the man of a smaller growth, might be well contented with mixing in them.

I ask my reader's pardon for that which he may consider so weak, albeit it is so true an acknowledgment.

But will the peruser of these records credit how I really found these children (and two of them girls) employed? A dead cat was lying in the middle of the field behind the school-house: poor starved beast! it had been happy enough to meet, from some tiny hand, the blow by stick or stone which had extinguished its vitality, and caused it to return to its kindred dust. It had probably strayed from its village home, where it had procured but slight food to support its fainting life, in the hope that it might in its rambles pick up some morsels of meat to allay its pinching hunger. Its destiny (for the days of the meanest animal, equally with those of a Solon or an Alexander, are numbered by an exact and an inevitable account) had led it to the neighbourhood of the school, from one of the inmates of which it had received the blow which had spread another meal before the rapacious and grim king of terrors. And the children were amusing themselves by kicking about from place to place, and trampling upon, this poor decaying remnant of mortality. "Alas!" I

exclaimed, as I found in what a different manner the young people were occupied, to that innocent and gentle way in which I had hoped to see them; "Alas! for poor human nature when not properly instructed and watched over! Why do these juvenile barbarians thus experience delight in mutilating the carcase of an animal which, living, never injured nor even annoyed them?—for the very last reason which a pure and holy being, formed in the image of its beneficent Creator—tender and very pitiful—would imagine possible: simply and solely because the creature lies before them unable to protect its body from molestation—because it is helpless!"

I came near and addressed myself to the children, but they were so absorbed in their occupation that they did not regard me; nor did I feel annoyed, upon my own account, at their utter inattention to my speech, for I was sure that it was but seldom they had opportunities of enjoyment, and I did not wonder that, when they could get pleasure, they did not let a moment of it escape them for the sake of mere civility to a stranger. I could find amusement when I desired it,—that is to say, I did not lack the power of participating in evening gaieties if I chose to taste of their sweets; but these young things had but little time in which they were released from the tasks of their school and the drudgeries of their homes. All that I felt angry at was, that these tender creatures could find no better sport than maltreating the body of an animal because it had ceased to have the power of defending itself.

In verity, there was but little for which to find fault with them on any subject. They had seen, and their parents before them had learned, in that village, that to be void of defence offered the best of all reasons for being oppressed and injured: that the weakness of youth and the wants of poverty were the chief causes why the hand of tyranny should be raised against those who would have seemed to have the strongest claims for protection. I ought, therefore, to have expressed my disapprobation of the great men of the district—of the squire and the surgeon—rather than of the imitative young people whom I looked upon whilst the poor dead cat was kicked about and trampled upon. I was quite at a loss what course to pursue—whether to walk at once into the house unintroducted and unasked, or whether to abandon altogether my intention of seeing the manner in which things were conducted there, and returning home without that part of my mission being fulfilled.

I was more than half tempted to relinquish my idea of treading within the portals of the school-house, when I saw, coming up the walk which led to the building, a pretty little girl about five years of age. Her face was just such an one as painters delight to depict for that of an angel who has descended from the region of brightness and joy, to gladden and bless for a while this lower world. She was the very creature to be made a "pet" of. Her auburn curls wound carelessly round her fair little face, and her small ruby lips were pressed, as if poutingly, together. The most

hardhearted, I should have supposed, would have softened towards her, and been ready to minister to all her wants, and to indulge her in all her childish but innocent fancies.



"My charming friend here will answer my purpose at last," said I to myself, "and now I shall have no cause to complain of not being attended to."

The little girl approached, bearing in her hand a bunch of wild flowers which she had gathered from the hedges. These gave me a subject for conversation as I supposed, and about these, therefore, I made my first observations.

"What pretty flowers you have got there!—did you gather them all?" She drew back and coloured up, and the tears seemed ready to mount into her eyes. I came nearer, and said, "Will you let me look at them?" With the kindness of her nature she did not like to refuse, but she seemed very reluctant to comply.

"I will not take them in my hand, then," I continued, "since I see you do not like to part with them; but what a little miser you are!" And I stroked back her curls as I uttered the words. The child looked at me with a beaming smile, and held the flowers out for me to take them all from her; in fact, she literally forced them into my hands.

"Why, how you are altered!" I cried: "just now you would not let me even *look* at your treasures, and now you push them into my hands: what can be the meaning of this?"

"You don't want to take them from me?" answered the little girl.

"That I am sure I do not. Why should I wish to do so? I could gather for myself from the hedges, without coming to rob you, and give you all your trouble for nothing."

I then very deliberately examined the flowers, one by one, and praised each of them, to my young companion's heart's content; though it needed no little admiration to come up to her desire, for she had a natural taste for these ornaments of our country walks;—a taste which is in the breast of every one, till the cold and corroding world deadens and freezes the sense of the pure and the beautiful, and makes the eye fail to notice the charms of creation, and the heart cease to appreciate the abundant loveliness of every field, every roadside, hedge, and quiet path. Whilst lauding the fascinations of the plants, I did not omit to extol the neatness of the manner in which my companion had arranged them in their order, so as to set off their varied tints to the best advantage; and in truth, I must confess that this commendation was fully as acceptable as the other. "But why," said I, "were you afraid of my taking away your flowers? Did I look so very cross and bad-tempered?"

"Oh, no, Sir! but I am very fond of picking wild flowers; and if anybody meets me whilst the flowers are pretty like these, and pleasing me to have them, then they jerk them out of my hand."

"It's very cruel and lazy of them: why can't they pick for themselves?"

"They don't want them, Sir; they only take them from me and throw them away: when I have got a nosegay, if it dies, then it's no use to me; and if it lives, it's sure to be jerked away, and thrown over some hedge which I can't get over."

"I am sure I would much rather give you any enjoyments than take them away from you. Do you come here early of a morning, when you gather these pretty flowers on the way?"

"Oh! yes, Sir; I'm always here at eight o'clock, and before that, too, sometimes; and after I get home at night my mother tries if I can't do more; and my legs *do* ache so, at the last, Sir!"

"But I suppose you do a great deal for your mother, one way and the other,—by learning your book, to make you a wise woman, and by assisting her in her household work?"

Little Kate was ashamed to say how little she did of laborious work, (although she was only five years old,) and she blushed up at the idea of the small progress she had made in her studies, although the fault was not her own, but that of her teachers.

"Come, come," said I, laughing, "never mind telling me if you are not a first-rate scholar; I dare say you do as much as you can."

"They don't try to teach us anything scarce, Sir, at the school;—they only make us come there, and don't let us speak, or anything; but they don't trouble themselves to make us learn books."

"But what is the use of your coming there at that rate? What are you the better for it?"

"They say, Sir, it's to keep us children out of mischief."

"This, I suppose," thought I, "is what they call a kind of preparatory school. Alas! if it is to keep them out of mischief, it is anything but a *preparatory* school to the world in which they are about to move. May I come in to your school-room, do you think?" I asked.

"Oh yes! Sir," answered Kate, "that I am sure you may; we shall be very glad."

And so, in truth, Kate would be, for she was happy to have found some one who would talk in a kind manner to her. We therefore walked together towards the door of the building. Kate drew back at the portal for me to enter before her,—for she thought, no doubt, that I should screen her from observation, as she had played the truant, and was anxious to hide her delinquencies. I looked in and took a brief survey of the room before I actually set my foot within it. As I may possibly be able to give my reader an idea of this place a little more correctly and graphically, if I do so detached from any account of what occurred after I went in, I shall endeavour to delineate the appearance of the school as I then surveyed it. Yet it is one so common to similar establishments, that I fear the picture will hardly prove interesting; but it is necessary for the due progress of my sketch that it should be given, and, accordingly, I proceed to the description.

It was a long and rather narrow room, with no signs whatever of any attention having been paid to its decoration or furniture. Against the wall were hung some few old maps, which had, probably, been placed there because some gentleman wished to get them away from his own house; they had certainly long since ceased to be of any use, for the face of the world had greatly altered since the period when the artist sketched them. Fresh discoveries had come to light since the year when these guides to knowledge were traced out, and the student who had made himself master of these stores had indeed had reason to weep, like Alexander, for a new world to conquer. A few large cards, with the alphabet upon them in ponderous letters, were also ranged around, as if to give the children some faint idea of the giant character of learning. A very long and common-looking table extended down the room; upon each side of which benches were placed, so that the students might place their books there. A range of children occupied these seats, and conned over their tasks in that sing-song tone which we invariably hear in one of these scholastic edifices; but while they made a loud sound, little indeed could be understood of the work in which they were engaged. It was a noise like that of a sea, which might, indeed, bear the valuable treasures of a fleet of merchantmen, but which is only bearing straws of no value, and semblances of vessels laden with precious things. The empty show of learning was

there, without the reality to make it useful. The children who were assembled were of ages varying from four to ten. They were all badly clothed, and they had generally that look which cannot be so well expressed as by the word "untidy." A distinction is here made between poorness of dress, and carelessness in dress, which is a very substantial one, and which an attentive observer can hardly fail to discover as he wanders through the villages and towns of his own country. The books which were spread before the pupils were in a dilapidated condition; some of them wanting the covers which used to protect them; others having but half the number of leaves requisite to their component parts. Many of those pages which remained were disfigured, and had holes in them, made by knives or other sharp instruments. At the upper end of the room, upon a high-backed chair, sat a sharp-eyed, fierce-looking, little man, in a suit of black, with a constant smile—a bitter smile—lurking about his lip. He laughed to himself,—a still, quiet, laugh,—as he saw that some pupil yawned, and threw himself back, in weariness of his often-repeated and vapid task—that some poor girl endeavoured to find a relaxation from her toils by whispering to her adjoining companion—or that some ill-fated boy drew from his pocket one or two marbles which he had managed to become possessed of, and now exhibited to his nearest friend.

A formidable cane (an instrument by no means superseded in the parochial schools of this country, however it may be generally so in the private academies for young ladies and gentlemen,) was reclining near to this head master, and was so placed as to be ready for action whenever it was required. About half-way down the room stood the assistant master;—a proud expression lighting up his face, for he who usually was despised and disregarded was now an object of respect and terror to those around him. He sat with a large book opened before him, but, like the gaze of his principal, that of this second teacher was ever wandering to the pupils, and happy was he if he found any doing what was forbidden, in order that he might bring them before the superior, to receive from him their condign punishments.

He was only about twenty years of age, and the short time which had passed since he was himself a schoolboy appeared to have left undisturbed in his mind the recollections of the tricks boys are apt to practise; and he therefore keenly watched and scrutinized, discovering a fault almost before it was committed.

I seize an opportunity which seems here to present itself to me, to express my utter detestation of the rod, as a signal of power and means of tuition. It may awe and terrify the pupil who sees it suspended over him, and is in momentary apprehension of finding it descend upon his devoted person; but it must fail—*must fail* in ever making the student *love* learning, and consequently making him pursue it with the ardour of a passionate admiration. It is true enough that, to escape an impending

danger from some fierce animal which is chained near the foot of a mountain, a man will ascend a mountain *once*, with very great swiftness; so great, indeed, that probably from no other cause could he ascend with more velocity; but it is equally true that, let him once again descend in safety, he will loathe and avoid to seek that hill again, from the very recollection of the unpleasantness which attended his previous journey. But suppose a man to ascend a height because those for whom he cherishes a tender affection resided above, who have ever hailed his arrival with pleasure, and sought to make him forget his labour in the recompense of love which awaited him; there will be no fear that he will cease to seek that eminence again, however arduous may be the effort, and however wearisome, at the time, the exertion which he is necessitated to use.

It is a false notion to suppose that a person is ever made fond of anything by compulsion; and it is as erroneous to imagine that he who is not fond of any object, (whatever that object may be,) will ever be as successful in the pursuit of it, as he who acts from a law of love, and works supported in his labours by the chords of affection.

At the lower end of the room sat a short, vulgar-looking, middle-aged woman, dressed very gaudily, and seeming very sleepy and wearied.

She had been selected as mistress over the girls, and, from there not being a separate apartment for them and the boys, (as indeed there often is not, in schools far distant from London,) she was obliged to sit in the same room with the first and second master. The pleasure of being a tyrant (the only one which fell to the lot of the men) was not one of her delights; and to exert herself to do good was not within her range of things imaginable: she therefore was content to lean back in her chair, fold her arms, half shut her eyes, and remain in a quiescent state, so that the spectator was almost in doubt whether or not "peaceful sleep, and slumbers light," had yet fallen upon her.

Standing in the room near to the table where the children were sitting were two ladies, who were gratuitous teachers at this seminary for youth. They had come there because they needed some employment in a dull and countrified village, to fill up their many vacant and listless hours. They walked about, and told the girls that they hoped they would mind their studies, and not laugh and play; and then they whispered to the boys to sit up, and not loll about in the way they usually did. They also endeavoured to hear whether the children did not make some laughable mistake when saying the few and short lessons which they did master, in order that they might narrate the blunders when around the social fireside in the evening.

These ladies, in fact, were teachers, for lack of occupation of any kind in the morning, and of amusement of any sort during the evening. As I walked into the room, the head master rose from his seat, and made

many of those obsequious bows which characterize the underbred and the tyrannical. He smiled upon me, and he was ready the next moment to frown upon and ill-treat his pupils.

The governess also rose sleepily, as if sorry to be aroused from her state of half-slumbering, and bowed her head in a languid and heavy manner.

The younger teacher did not think it worth his while to rise, but threw himself back, and stared impudently up, as much as to say, "I am as good a man as you are, and as good a scholar too; that I'll stand to; and I am here not to learn, but to teach."

The two ladies looked flustered at the idea of any stranger's entrance into their haunt of retirement, but they were still gratified to have something to relate at home.

The children suspended even the little study in which they were before engaged, and sat open-mouthed to hear all that was about to be said. The head teacher came forward, and smilingly inquired,—

"Did you wish to look over this school, Sir? If so, I shall be happy to show it to you. I am quite the manager of it, and have it all under my own care, so I shall be able to explain all about it to you very easily."

I signified my assent, and he ushered me down the room towards the head preceptress, and introduced me to her very formally.

"This is Mrs. Smith, Sir; she devotes all her time and her talents to this delightful task of teaching the young, and making their ideas shoot forth and bud."

This preliminary being finished, I was next taken to the ladies, and informed that "they, most kindly and praiseworthily, felt a pleasure in dedicating their talents to the furtherance of education and propriety of conduct." He did not deign a word about the under teacher, for he looked upon him with all the contempt with which a narrow-minded man, just one step above another, ever regards his inferior.

A dialogue, something like the following, then ensued:—

"Have you many children in this school?"

"Oh! a great many, Sir! The care of them is very heavy upon me. I am afraid that my health suffers by it, by over-thought and watchfulness; and that is the opinion, too, Sir, of the managers, who are kind enough to think not a little of my humble efforts."

"Do you know the exact number of the pupils?"

"No, Sir, I cannot say that I do, for I never take any particular account of them: they come for a week, and then their parents take them home again, and so on; that it's really no use trying to count up anything about it: it's no manner of use in the world."

The instructress here volunteered to speak, and said there were a hundred and eighty-one pupils. This was one of the few things which Mrs.

Smith did know, and she was glad to find that there was somebody who did not know it, to whom she might have the gratification of communicating her knowledge.

"I hope they are good boys?"

"Very much to the contrary, Sir, I am sorry to say; and yet I do all in *my* power to treat them with kindness and make them fond of their books."

Here he gave one of the smallest children a terrible cut with his cane, because the child happened to stare up in wonder at the ceiling for a moment, and assured him that, "if he did not behave better, he would mark against his name, and remember him in future."

The little boy began to sob as if his heart would break, and I could not help asking "whether the parents of the children liked their being struck so sharply as I had just had a specimen of their being?"

"Why, Sir," cried the astonished Mentor, "I should like to hear any complaints about it! The children would soon be turned off, I can tell you. They only come here as a favour and a pleasure, and that's what I'm always telling them."

"Have you no managers of the school? and if so, do *they* like the children to be beaten?"

"Oh, yes, Sir, we have; but they never come more than once a-month, and then they go again in a few minutes. They're known, you see, Sir, to be the managers, and so they think they must come just now and then, to keep up appearances, but they depend thoroughly on me."

"But the Clergyman,—I should hope that *he* comes sometimes?"

"Oh! I beg his pardon, I am sure, Sir, for omitting to name him before: he comes every week, Sir; and he tells me then that he hopes I keep a good look-out over the children, and don't let them forget what they have come for."

"And do you think that the children are happy? for that is a great thing, in my opinion."

The Master looked astonished for a minute, and then called out, in a loud and self-assured voice, "Children! are you happy?"

There was not one responsive voice: it was a question which they could not answer in the affirmative, and therefore they were silent. It was such an inquiry as had not before been made of them; and they were too young and too honest to forge the ready falsehood to meet it.

I bowed to the Master, the Mistress, and the assisting ladies, and left the school-room: the silence of the young ones had given me a forcible assurance of the same fact to which the whole tenor of the Master's replies had unconsciously borne testimony; and I walked into the open air once more.

I believe that I before intimated to my reader that I intended, if I found, upon personal investigation, that things were badly conducted in the

village which I have been for some time describing, to visit the Union Workhouse, which I have mentioned as being situated in the same place. I accordingly now put my plan into speedy execution.

I trust that in the remarks which I am about to make I shall be understood as objecting to the conduct of *some* only of that large body—Poor Law Guardians.

I hold it as most illiberal and most unfair, to attack any class of men collectively, and more particularly such as have weighty and arduous offices to perform. The duties of public life must be fulfilled; and for their right and proper fulfilment, the thanks of other men are justly due. I blame those alone who turn their “little brief authority” into a means of tyranny over their humbler fellow-creatures, and who make rules or enforce enactments without pity or consideration for others. Such persons as accept an appointment for the sake of carrying out the regulations of the law in a manner the most conducive to the general good, and who are ready to take upon themselves the odium which appertains to the bearers of office under an Act displeasing to the mass of the community—but which Act is still, for the time being, the law of the land—such persons, I say, are well entitled to the gratitude of their country, and not to the censure of any man, either by word of mouth or by written disapprobation.

Having made this preliminary explanation, (in the hope that I may not be misunderstood, or considered as illiberal,) I pass on to the account of

THE UNION WORKHOUSE.

I shall not now, I trust, be deemed unjust if I express my dislike to the manner in which all these union workhouses are built in the country—or, at least, all that I have ever seen, which are not a few in number, and which are situated at considerable distances from one another. I here blame *all* that I have seen, it is true; but it is only with the *whole that I have seen* I am finding fault: I am therefore not condemning at random, nor aiming arrows without a destined mark. Whether the architects be to be censured, as selecting such a style of building, or whether they are who choose the designs of so unpleasant a description, I am not able to tell; but that a fault lies somewhere, in the instances which have fallen under my own knowledge, I do not hesitate to say.

I shall be glad to find that others of these edifices are of a different construction. I hope sincerely that there are such; and if there are, of course censure will not attach where it is not due, as the description I am about to give will, I believe, be sufficient to mark out the kind of erections to which I allude, the style of which I condemn. I fancy I see some of my readers, as they peruse this, laugh at the explanation I have given, and exclaim that there is no fear a person of so little importance in any way as I am can injure by my condemnation so great a body as the archi-

fects of this country, or can annoy those gentlemen with whom rested the selection of the designs submitted by those talented individuals. Had I been assured of this, I might not, perhaps, have entered into this detail.

There is an ancient fable, which everybody recollects, of the lion being freed from his bondage by the efforts of an humble and despised mouse; and, should this fable have a true application, it is possible that another animal, equally contemptible and powerless, may have some share in forming the net which is to take captive some creature of capabilities and greatness which are very superior to his own.

It needs but little inquiry in a rural district to find out, from the passengers whom we meet, whereabouts the union workhouse is situated.

In a city like London, which has its tens of thousands ever passing and repassing, without connexion with that part through which they are walking, it is very frequently necessary to ask a great many times before the object of which we are in search, be it ever so near, is to be met with. But it is not so in the country. We can there have the nearest way to, and the exact position of a house many miles distant described to us; and most especially can we have an account thus minute, when our questions regard "The Union Workhouse." It is a hundred chances to one but the rustic of whom you inquire has some friend within its walls; or if not, that he has some humble acquaintance who has sojourned, is sojourning, or is about to sojourn there. It is wonderful to see how acute it makes a man in the knowledge of the locality of any place when he is interested in some one beneath its roof: then the way in which it is to be approached in the shortest period is fully in his mind;—then its situation as regards health and convenience for its inhabitants is studied over, and remembered.

The path to the workhouse was soon and accurately explained to me. The building was about half a mile from the village, and a well-marked-out road led up to it. A high and thick brick wall surrounded it, so elevated, that it was impossible for the inmates to see aught beyond its boundaries. They might, indeed, look up and behold the sky which was spread above them; but as to looking upon the scenes of the country, with their fellow-men passing upon their avocations, it was a privilege which they did not enjoy. If a foreigner—a stranger to our land, and to the mode of procedure here—had been conducted thither, and asked for what purpose was that edifice erected, I am convinced that he would have answered, "To contain the worst prisoners, who are to have the blessings of air and light denied to them, and to be prevented from escaping from their place of bondage when they are once secured." Yet how different, how very different, is the fact!—placed there, as it is, to hold within its walls those whose errors, whether induced by heedlessness on their own parts, (and I am free to confess that want of care is one fruitful source of misfortune to the poor,) or by reverses which come they know not how,—whose sorrows force them to ask a refuge and a home at the hands of their fellow-

men. In the infinite variety of human tastes and wandering fancies, it is very probable that men might be found willing and desirous to incarcerate themselves, and shut out from sight the glad scenes of life and activity; and if these people liked to build such a house, who could wonder at it? But to think that any should erect a gloomy prison as a dwelling for the unfortunate, is one of the strangest things in the world, and such an one as the imagination of a benevolent man would last of all suggest to him.

There was a small entrance through a gate, which latter was guarded by a man who lived in a kind of watch-box just within the wall. In the gate there was a small grating, through which the porter could look out before he opened it, in order that if any troublesome applicants should attempt to force a passage, he might prevent their setting foot within the precincts. The wisdom of the small aperture for reconnoitring was made evident, upon perusing a notice which was painted in great white letters upon a large black board, and affixed to the front wall. It was to the effect that only for a short time, and that only on particular days in each week, would non-residents be allowed to speak with, or to see, those who were occupants of the workhouse. This notification was signed with all due propriety, and attracted the public eye. When a person, ignorant of this regulation, came from a far distance on purpose to see some friend to whom he was fondly attached, and of whom poverty was the only crime, how sad must it have been to him to be turned back from the gate, and forbidden to look upon the one he loved, solely because that one had been in his distress obliged to seek parochial assistance!

How might he have been inclined, had the gate been open, to yield no attention to the veto of the stern porter at his post of duty, but to push his way within, and commit the fault of taking by the hand the companion of happier and brighter hours! It was very politic, then, to place this little spying-place, that the porter might take a survey ere he ran the risk of raising the latch to admit an applicant for a brief admission into the union workhouse.

Upon my knocking at the gate with the knocker which was appended thereto, the observatory was made use of by a fat and pompous-looking man. Having surveyed me for a short time from his stronghold, he inquired "what I wanted, and why I knocked?" I replied that "I was anxious to come in, if he would be so kind as to open the gate."

"Of course that's why you come;" he retorted, "but what do you want to do when you come in?"

"To see the building, and the people who are residents here."

"Oh! then I suppose you are a friend to some of the paupers?"

"I am a friend to all of them."

"To all of them!" (and the porter stared very hard): "Oh! if you're a friend, you can't come in. Read that board up there, and you'll see that

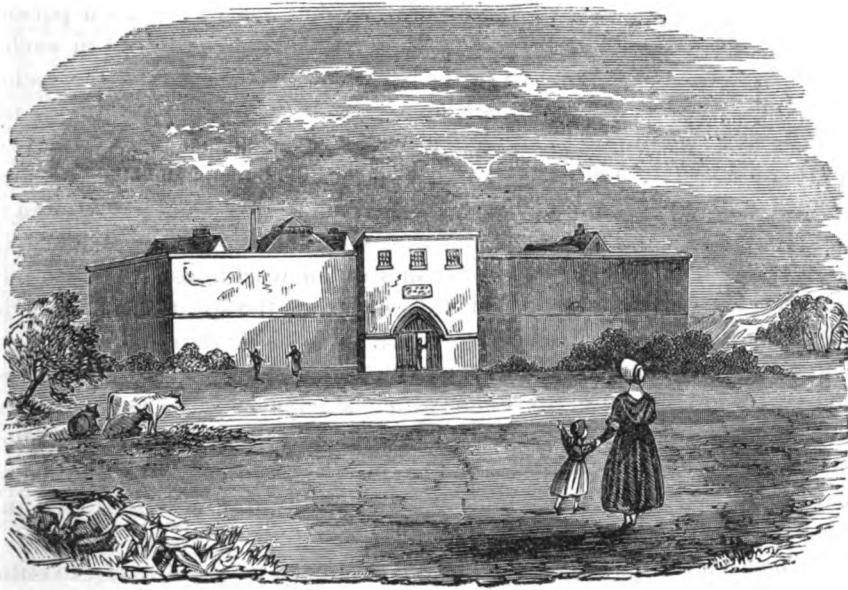
friends can only come in on a certain day, and for a short time. This is not one of the free times."

"But perhaps you mistake me: when I say that I am a friend, I mean only that I am a well-wisher to them all; and not that I have any acquaintance with them."

"Oh! I didn't understand; certainly that's not the way the guardians ever speak of the paupers."

"All that I want is to have an opportunity of looking over the building, and of seeing the inhabitants."

"Oh! well! that's a different affair. I have no authority for letting you in, and very likely I may be blamed afterwards for having acted without instructions: yet I wish always to be civil and obliging; so I'll venture the risk, Sir, and open the gate."



It would, perhaps, be unjust in me to conjecture that the janitor was influenced at all in this polite course by an idea that I carried any of the small coin of the realm; but certainly the last of his speeches was delivered with a tone and manner strikingly different to that with which he first accosted me.

The gate was opened, and I was admitted. I had then an opportunity of seeing the edifice, which before, from the height of the wall, I was unable to do. It was a long low house, of red brick; the windows were all of a small size, and situated at a short distance from one another. There was a large door, which was placed exactly in the centre of the building, and which opened into the hall. The whole appearance was such as my

reader may probably have beheld in a picture done by a little child who could just manage to draw lines, and call them a house. The child studied not one grace or beauty in the architecture; neither did the constructor of this union workhouse: the child aimed not to plan such a house as would be comfortable to reside in; neither did the architect. They both drew what gave them the least trouble, and that which could bear the appellation of a dwelling-place, without any of its usual comforts.

A few men were straggling about the piece of enclosed ground in front, languidly dragging their bodies, as if worn out by their sorrow, as well as by that *ennui* consequent on their tarrying within such a residence. I cannot forbear, here, to express my great dislike to the mode of dress peculiar to the inhabitants of these receptacles for the poor and the miserable. My idea is, that those only who are really deserving of assistance should obtain it by gaining board, lodging, and clothing within establishments maintained at the expense of their country; but that, when such persons do apply for aid, and do meet with it, it ought to be bestowed in such a manner as would be conducive to the happiness and comfort of the recipients. Let them not feel that their own land is helping them in their necessities, and yet doing so in such a method as to cancel the obligation. Now I can scarcely conceive that anything can be more painful to a man of sensitive feeling, to one who has once mixed amongst his fellow-men as an equal and a friend, when compelled, from circumstances over which he has no control, to partake of charity in a union workhouse—a thing in itself miserable enough, calculated to bow down the spirit and grieve the heart of a man of independent mind—than to be necessitated to wear a peculiar dress—the livery of poverty, and that manufactured of the coarsest and worst kind of materials—one which stamps him as a pauper!—one which, should he be allowed to go out for a holiday and wander miles from his own village, will still mark him, in the eyes of all whom he meets, as supported by charity, and bound to wear the uniform of dependence and distress.

The men who were walking about the enclosure were all ready to enter into conversation with me. It was a treat to them to have some stranger to talk to, and they were desirous to prolong the dialogue as much as possible. I soon informed them, as they gathered round me, of my wish to look over the workhouse, which wish was one inducement (among others) for my visit to the village in which the building was situated. They expressed no little surprise that any one should have an inclination to come there. They did not think that, if I once went round the place, and saw the inhabitants, I should have any cravings again to come within those walls. They next requested to learn what part of the structure I was anxious to inspect first. I was hardly enough conversant with the matter to be able to give them a correct and explicit answer.

They counselled me by all means to go to the board-room, the favoured

spot in which the managers assembled once every week. The poor men had all of them been once in it, when they came to be examined, previous to their admission ; and the look of comfort given by the warm carpet, the blazing fire, and the screen to protect from the wind, which might, peradventure, still creep within the door upon some bitter morning in January, had all made a lasting impression upon the people with whom I conversed. It is very likely this admiration of the conveniences, and (in a small degree) the elegancies, of this room for the Guardians, had been considerably heightened by a comparison which they were soon enabled to make between them and the want of aught for gratification or neatness in the apartments of the Guarded.

I assured them that it was no intention of mine, in bending my steps thitherwards, to contemplate with delight the pretty carpet or the roaring fire of the guardians' chamber ; that the object of my search was to see the manner in which the poor, and not the wealthy, fared. Yes ! I wished to ascertain if the dormitories of the poor were cold, and not if the room where the rich sat and dozed over the sorrows of the humble was sufficiently heated. They then told me that I had better go into the long-room, where, in the daytime, the male inmates of the workhouse assembled—as there would be no obstacle to my doing so, if I got leave from the master, who was easily to be found ;—and that subsequently I might go into that of the women, upon getting the assent of the mistress.

I accepted their advice, and having gained the permission of the master, I walked into the long-room, where all the males were allowed to be together during the daytime.

I thought that, to be fair and honest in my judgment of matters, I would not single out one person from the many whom I saw about the room on my going in, for he might be peculiarly unhappy in his own temperament, or might particularly dislike the idea of dwelling in a workhouse. I resolved, therefore, that I would indiscriminately speak to each man whom I approached—at any rate, to the extent of four or five ; and then form my conclusions on a solid and true basis.

To avoid confusion, then, I shall give “the plain unvarnished tale,” as the facts occurred ; and not allow my conversation with any two of the paupers to blend together.

The room was a very extensive one, and the people were in various parts of it, and were occupied in as many ways as their confined circumstances allowed of. The man who sat nearest the door was reading a printed notice which was issued by the Poor Law Commissioners for the guidance of their widely-spread representatives. He was engaged in spelling over the words, of which he would soon be taught the *meaning*.

He was a strong and bearty man, and I wondered to see him an inmate of a workhouse, and was half-inclined to set him down as one of those

useless fellows who are happy to be supported in idleness, forgetful of the poor and miserable, for whose care the charitable abodes of the parish are intended. He was a man of forty years of age, and had the look of one who had been accustomed to labour with his hands, and was capable of earning the reward of his toils with assiduity and zeal. Yet he was now in a union :—and for what ?

“ I am rather surprised, my friend, to see a hearty and fine man like you sitting quietly down in a workhouse. You ought to be doing something for your own living.”

“ I wish I was allowed, Sir, with all my heart.”

“ Allowed ! How do you mean ? Surely people would be glad to have you get your own living in an honest and an industrious way, rather than that you should be a burthen to the parish.”

“ It does not seem that everybody would, Sir.”

“ I wish you would let me know what you have been. I imagine—indeed, I am sure—from your appearance, that you have been engaged in some laborious work, before you entered this place.”

“ I worked hard enough, Sir, I can tell you, at a manufactory in the neighbouring town ; and as long as I had only myself, or even myself and a wife and a child or two, to support, I got on very well indeed ; but when I came to have such a large family as eight children, I found that the small wages I got would not answer, and that I was every week getting more and more in debt to the tradesmen where I dealt. I did not know what to do ; but at last I thought I would go to the parish officer and see what could be done. It was a hard struggle for me to go, Sir, I can tell you ; for after a man has lived for forty years earning his own bread, it goes very much against him to turn a beggar, if he is ever so hard pressed.”

“ I hope, then, that the parish officer received you well when you went to him, as he must have been sure, from your former conduct, in always labouring hard and maintaining your wife and children, that you did not wish to live on charity without striving for your family and yourself.”

“ When I went up to the officer, Sir, he smiled very pleasant, and said, ‘ Well, John, I’m glad to see you this fine day ; ’ but, as soon as ever I told him what I’d come about, he starts off quite surprised, and says, ‘ Oh ! John, you’re joking ; you never would think of asking relief—I’m sure you wouldn’t.’ But I told him, Sir, I was never less inclined to joke than I was then, and that I was grieved to my heart to have to ask for charity. Well, Sir, as soon as he found that I was in earnest, he said, ‘ Why, I don’t know what to answer you ; there are so many requiring assistance that we hardly know which way to turn among them. It puzzles a judge to find out how to attend to all those who need some aid from us. Perhaps you can look up again in a week or two, and then, if matters go on no better,

we may talk about it.' I told him, Sir, that I was sure matters would only get worse and worse with us, and that I had put off coming as late as I could, and that I begged him to let me know something or other at once.

" 'You know, my dear fellow, he cried out directly, I have no power to say good or bad to you;—of course, if it rested with me, you should have whatever you liked in a minute, without any more words about it;—but I am a mere nobody—I am only a servant of others. If you want relief, you must apply to the Board of Guardians—they are the proper people, you know,—and not me, you know; for, as I told you before, I'm no use in life.' I begged him then to tell me when I could see the guardians, and he told me the day and the hour at which I might come before them. On a very grand board-day, Sir, (for so I was told they called it,) I was had in before the gentlemen assembled. You may easily think, Sir, how I felt when I had to come in and ask like a beggar of so many fine gentlemen at once. I went in, however, with as good a face as I could, knowing it was no fault of mine which brought me there. There was Squire this, and Squire that, all down a long table, and the first of all sat in a large chair with a high back at the upper end. The relieving officer told them all about what I had said to him, and what he had said to me, and then he asked me to answer any of the questions the gentlemen might think fit to put to me. I stood at the lower end of the long table; and my great hope that my point might be gained, and my fear of the Squires all about, made me feel in such a way as I can't describe to you.

" I recollect, Sir, all that passed as well as if it was all before me. The Chairman asked me what was my name, and, as I told him, everybody at the table wrote it down very busily on pieces of paper that were laid before them. In the same way they went on at every question about my age and my place of abode, and it seemed to me as if I had risen to great consequence all of a sudden, that they should wish to have such a full account of me to keep by them. 'Have you a wife?' 'Yes, Sir.' 'What does she do for her support?' 'Very little, Sir; for her health has been so bad a long while that she has scarce strength for anything.' 'How many children have you?' 'Eight, Sir.' 'What are their ages?' 'The eldest of them ten years only, and the youngest a baby in arms.' 'What wages do you get for your work?' 'Nine shillings a-week, Sir.' 'And what do you apply now for at our hands?' 'I am very anxious, Sir, for a small sum a-week, which, added to what I make by my work, would be sufficient to bring my family up in a respectable and honest way.' The gentlemen all looked at one another for a minute or two, and then they nodded their heads, as if to say that their opinion was the same, although they had had no conversation about my case. 'We all should be glad, John,' said the Chairman, 'if we could do anything for you in the way you ask, but we don't see how we can. Out-door relief—out-door relief, you know, is a very expensive

affair; and the Commissioners in London are anxious that it should not be given when it can be avoided. So I'm afraid we must decline giving it to you, although we should be quite ready to assist you, if we could see our way.'

"I begged the gentlemen to let me have something, if it was only a couple of shillings a-week, as I should strive with that to make it out; but they would not agree to it anyhow. They said they had a duty to perform, and that they must keep to it. I did not know what to do, Sir, and I cried out, 'Well, gentlemen, if you don't grant me that, the whole of us—my wife, my eight children, and myself—must come upon the parish altogether, for I cannot live anyhow upon what I can make. Any one that knows me will testify that I do my utmost; and if that only brings me nine shillings a-week, how is it possible that I can keep all those months filled? We must all come upon the parish, and that's the long and the short of it.'

"As soon as I had said this, the Chairman answered me, 'Well, you know that you can do that if you like. You can all come into the workhouse; there can be no objection to that; and it's the best way too, if you can't make it out by your labour.' The thought of going into one of these places cut me to the quick, for I had always been brought up to dislike such a course; and I begged the gentlemen to think what a difference it would make to the parish, whether they had the entire support of ten persons in idleness, while one of them was able to work, or whether they gave only two or three shillings a-week, and let them be maintained by the father of the family, by honest toil. It was quite out of reason to put the two things together, you know, Sir—whether a trifle like that should be laid out, and let people be happy, or thirty times, perhaps, the sum be spent, and make people wretched.

"The gentlemen told me that was all very true, and that very likely many were in the same condition as myself and felt as I did; but that they must obey orders, and that it had been judged right by those who were in London, *and who, of course, must know*, to make it a rule not to give out-door relief in cases like mine. I tried very hard with them, Sir, but it would not do. So, after a great deal of talking, it ended at last with their telling me that on such a day, and at such a time, I might, if I chose, bring my wife and my eight children, and all of us should, from that time forward, become the inmates of the union workhouse. This was a bitter struggle for us, Sir, but we could do nothing else; so, from living a respectable and industrious life, we turned nothing better than paupers, eating the bread given us by charity. What a dreadful thing it is, Sir, for anybody who has been brought up in a respectable way to have to come and mix with the set which they have to do with here! You know well enough, Sir, that there are a great many men in the world who wish for nothing else than to be supported in laziness, and that these people are the

vilest in their way of talking and acting that can be thought of. Now these (in such a place as this) are the very ones who are to be company for the honest and hard-working, who, because they cannot gain a little help to let them go on in their daily toils, have to herd with such a mob. Gentlemen don't consider this, or they would, I am sure, make some alteration in their way of ordering matters. The bad and the good were never meant to be treated as if they were all of one kind, I am quite sure, Sir.

"But this is not the worst part, Sir: with a wife that one dotes upon, and children that one loves like one's own soul, they are separated from one, and are put to live with all the worst of women and children that can be got together. Now we all know how apt young people are to pick up bad words and names; and the worse they are the quicker they catch them. We all know as well, Sir, that, as they grow up, they will turn out in the same way they have followed in when they were young; and that, if their first years are given up to wicked songs and oaths, their older years will be spent in profligacy and idleness. Now this is a heartbreaking thought for a man whose aim has been to teach his children the right and proper way. But it is not, as I have said, for my children only I care, but for my wife as well.

"There is no charm, Sir, like that of modesty in a woman, to any man of proper feeling. However much they may admire the charms of her face and figure, if she has not a right sense of her own respectability and honour, men don't regard her looks for much, or set any price by them. They'll flatter her, and all that, you know, Sir; and they'll pretend to her, perhaps, that they like that freedom of manner and talk,—but they like it none the better for all that. Now these were quite my feelings when I married: I looked out for fine looks, of course; but much more than that to bashfulness: and I must say I was lucky in gaining what I sought,—for a more discreet, chaste, modest woman than my wife can't possibly exist. But now she is come here she is obliged to mix with such of her own sex as she would not have had any acquaintance with out of here. Now, there is an old saying that 'Evil communications corrupt good manners;' and what a wretched thing it would be for me, if ever we get out of this workhouse again, to find that my wife had got to like such conversation as she heard when she was here; and that, although her *conduct* might be good enough, yet that her pure way of thinking and speaking was gone! It would ruin the whole peace and comfort of my life, and make my poor little home a miserable place of punishment. Yet why should I trust to either my wife or my children being better than others?—for I know they are human creatures, and I have good reason then to fear what harm the company they have to keep may do to them.

"Then, Sir, there is one other thing which is a great grief to me,—and that is, thinking that I am dependent. If I could anyhow support my

family, by working day and night till my arms dropped off from fatigue, I think I would rather do it than live with the constant feeling that I am an object of charity. A man can't help being ashamed, although it is no fault of his, that he has to eat the meat for which he does nothing; and that while old people, and those in bad health, are wanting some help, he, an able-bodied man, is living upon parochial bounty. Not but there are many young, hearty men here who don't feel this at all; but then they are just the men who ought not to be allowed to live upon charity, or to have the comforts of a house over their heads, when they won't labour to get themselves a place to live in, and bread to eat."

I felt the force of all that this poor man had said to me, and I told him that I did so,—with which he seemed no little comforted; for many of the men with whom necessity made him associate were so worthless as to think that such ideas as fears for the purity of thought in a woman, or for the innocence of speech in a child, were ridiculous to indulge; and with them, the bare imagination that any one could have fretted that he was not allowed to have hard and almost unceasing labour, would have called forth a laugh at the folly of the "idiot," as they would have denominated him.

I now quitted the first person whom I had noticed, and went on to speak to the second, who was a very short distance from him. The person to whom I next addressed myself was an aged man: his grey locks hung in lengthy curls over his thin shoulders, and his taper fingers kept continually clutching, with the nervousness of old age. He was so weakened by sickness, and the natural infirmities attached to the period of fourscore years, that he was necessitated to lean against the wall for the requisite support. His eyes—over which the dimness of the fading twilight of man's pilgrimage had cast its thickening and saddening veil—endeavoured to discern who it was that approached him, as I advanced, but yet endeavoured in vain. He knew that it was a human being, but his sight aided him not to discover the age or description of person.

He was very sad in his countenance, and yet he was trying to sing—"to drive dull care away" (if she would consent to be driven);—then, in a tremulous and most unheroic voice, he sang the valiant deeds which, in years long since fled, and when youth and vigour nerved his arm, he had accomplished for the good of his native land, to preserve for his countrymen—what?—a home, with nought in it but silence,—pleasures, with nought in them but a name! Who, to have looked upon him now, would have believed that he had ever wielded the ponderous sword, and urged the panting courser? Or who would have believed that, having done so, he would have had to finish a career of glory and courage within the precincts of an Union Workhouse?

I know of few sights more melancholy than that of an old man sitting *solitary*. I do not mean, by the last word, when he is entirely by himself,

for I have often noticed some old man quite alone, yet with a smile of satisfaction and contentment beaming over his countenance. Then is he, peradventure, thinking of his dear grandchildren, who are for a season absent from him, but yet are ever present to him in memory ;—or, it may be, he is musing over the acts of love which his children have performed towards him ;—or, again, he may be recalling days of pleasure which he passed with friends then young and new, but now old and tried. He who has gentle and tender thoughts and memories has no solitude ; for to him all nature speaks of happiness and peace,—of kindly faces,—of outstretched hands,—of words of affection uttered from the heart :—

“ A man whose hairs were grey,
Whose brow bore token of the lapse of years ;
Yet o'er his heart affection's gentle sway
Maintain'd that lingering spell which age endears
. . . . His eyes were dim with tears,
But not with tears of sorrow,—for the eye
Is often wet with joy and gratitude ;—
And with his faltering voice, and tear, and sigh,
Declar'd a heart by thankfulness subdued.

His strength was failing, but it seem'd to sink
So calmly, tenderly, it woke no fear ;
'Twas like a rippling wave on ocean's brink,
Which breaks in dying music on the ear,
And placid beauty on the eye ;—no tear,
Except of quiet joy, in his was known.”—

But he of whom I should speak as pitying him, is he who sits solitary amidst other men,—who finds no answering tone to the note of his own heart,—who looks for no sympathy, knowing, from long experience, that he shall find none,—who mixes amongst men as aliens and strangers, not as fellow-countrymen and friends. To see such a state, in any man, is cause for yearning compassion ; but pre-eminently so when that man is an aged one. When the hoary head is bowing towards the grave with the weight of accumulated years, and the eye which once shone brightly is dimmed and darkened, then do we look for, and trust to find, the son, the grandson, or the friend near to him, ready and eager to minister to and cheer the patriarch who is passing away from the earth.

This poor old man in the workhouse seemed thoroughly dejected : to see him one might well have supposed that for a series of years his existence had been full of misfortunes.

“ You sing well, my old friend,” said I, addressing him ; “ you must have been a fine singer some forty years ago.”

“ Forty years ! ” answered the aged man, pausing in his melody ; “ that's a long time, and great changes have taken place since then, I can tell you. I was a hale, hearty fellow, then, full of life and glee, able to fight for my country, and to die in her defence ; and now I can only sit and sigh, and think of what things used to be and what they are now ! ”

“ You were a soldier formerly, it appears, then : were you much engaged in active service ? ”

“ Oh dear, yes ! Sir ; I was in the West India Islands in the great battles there, and in America, and in the Peninsula. I was wounded in some of them, and stood a good chance of being killed in the whole of them.”

“ You had an arduous life.”

“ Why, Sir, for the matter of that, I did not care for the fatigue and trouble ; I was strong and hearty, and I found a pleasure in risking life and limb for those I had left at home in England. But one thing used to make me very sad when I was in service, and that was, that I was away from my Margaret,—that’s my wife, Sir,—and I often thought that I should be happy when the time came for my leaving off being a soldier, as I should then be at home with the woman I loved. My good woman was too delicate in health to go with me, and bear all the roughness of the camp ; and to fancy that I should meet her, and not part any more from her, was a joy to me when I was lying upon the bare ground, or when I was in the middle of the enemy’s ranks.”

“ And did you remain long in the army ? ”

“ I stayed on, Sir, to the very latest time that a man is allowed to be in it ; and when I quitted it I was an old man in years, and older still from the hard life I had passed, and was an invalid, too, from the wounds I had received more than once in battle. I was not fit for anything, hardly, except being taken care of and nursed by some one who cared for me ; and of course I hoped it would be with my dear wife—my dear *old* wife now—that I should pass my remaining years in the world. I got a small pension when I left the army, but so small that it went a very little way to support two people, and to find them in food and lodging. If our services, Sir, were as small as our pensions, I think our country would have been conquered before this. As I said, I was almost past work, but I was able, for some years after I left the ranks, to earn a few shillings a-week ; but afterwards my little strength failed me, and I could not get the employ I used to get in occasional jobs. When I found how bad matters were going with me, I went and spoke to some of the better sort of people in the parish, to know what they thought could be done in my behalf.”

“ Well ! and what did they advise you, in answer to your application ? ”

“ They told me, Sir, that all I could do would be to go to the work-house ; that they were very sorry I should be driven to such a life, but that no other means seemed left to me in such a poor place.”

“ And I suppose that you felt a great reluctance to go into the work-house ? ”

“ Indeed I did, Sir ; and so ought every honest man who has lived independent before, and has earned his own bread : but it could not be helped, and so I told my old woman that we must even go there, and put up with workhouse fare, and consent to be reckoned as paupers, for I was sure

that we should be looked upon in that light. But I quite forgot, when I said this, that when we got into the workhouse we were to be separated from one another, and kept apart in opposite portions of the building. But it was the law of the workhouse, and it was no use to hope that any difference would be made in my case.

"This is a wonderful law, is it not, Sir? I dare say you remember what is said in the Bible account about the first man, that his wife was made as a help for him—that is, as I read it, (but perhaps I am wrong,) as one who is to be with him, not only when he is young, and hearty, and rich, but when he is old, and sick, and poor, as well. But the Poor Law says, 'No: it's all right enough that, when a man is rich, and all that, his wife should be with him; but when he most of all needs her company, let her be taken away.' This may be right enough—for I am not much of a scholar; but all I can say is, that I don't see any mention of it in Scripture, and I have often looked to the account of late to make it out.

"And then again, Sir, you will recollect what is said about man and wife, in the Marriage Service, that 'those whom Heaven has joined together, man ought not to put asunder:' but I suppose when this was made there were no Union Workhouses—or, if there were, that they were conducted in a different way. But it's a sad way now of doing things. They tell us that in this country people are not left to starve in their old age, but that care is taken of them when they get past labour, and that a house is open to receive them. But what a kindness is this, Sir! to allow a man and woman who have lived together, perhaps for sixty years, to come and pass months without each other's society; it's breaking people's hearts at once."

"And have you found the separation very unbearable since you have been here?"

"Why, at first, Sir, I was thinking so much of the shame of having to come to such a place as this—one which I never thought for a moment I should have to come to—that I did not think about Margaret; at least not in the same way as I did soon afterwards. You see, Sir, there's such a deal that is strange at first, in a house of this kind, to a person when he first enters it, that it takes his mind away from brooding over his own troubles, and forces him to look about him and see what is going on. But in a little while this novelty passes away, and a man comes to look to himself and to feel his own sorrows in a manner that he didn't do at the beginning. I have felt this, Sir, I can assure you."

"I can easily understand this, my friend, from my own feelings when in new and unpleasant circumstances."

"Oh yes, Sir! I found the want of some one I loved, that I might tell my griefs to at being deprived of my respectability, (as you may call it,) and being placed in a house with all the worst of the worst—for so many

R

of them are, that are to be met with here. I wanted to have some one who cared for me, and who could tell me of the like feelings on her part. But, as it was, I was placed with people who did not value me or my feelings a straw, nor wish to hear me speak to them. I might just as well have been shut up in a prison, and kept out of sight and of hearing of any soul; for who was there that I found any pleasure in looking upon or conversing with?"

"And you must have missed your old companion in many ways."

"In every way, Sir!—I think this Poor Law, as it is called, must have been made by young men who can go out and hunt or shoot, and leave their wives at home without giving them a thought for days together—or who can go to the clubs and get laughing and joking there, as I have been told that they do, and be well content that their wives are not there to see them; but it could never have been made by old men. They know how they themselves look to their wives for every comfort in life; they have their old thoughts together, their old recollections of what has taken place years and years before, and which is fresh in the minds of both of them still. The law never came from them, Sir, I am sure.

"When I used to be feeling ill, now, my wife knew every little pain and ache better than I did myself, and could tell me what I had done before to take them away. When I used to be inclined to laugh and joke, how she joined with me, and was ready to share in the jest, whatever it might be, because I was lively disposed! When I was anxious to walk, who could accompany me so pleasantly? When I went to my bed, who could smooth the pillow down so softly? When I would eat, who made dry bread seem sweet by the smile with which she gave it? When I would drink, who made the cold water taste like the finest wines, from the readiness with which she offered it to me?

"But there is one thing worse than all that I have been saying about myself, and that is, Sir, how can I know what is going on with Margaret? She may be sad, for all I can tell—she may be ill, for all I can tell—she may be dying, for all I can tell. Perhaps the first news that some chance may bring to me will be that she is dead—and then!"—

The old man abruptly broke off at this point. He had worked himself up to such a degree of excitement by the supposition of what might be, that he could not continue to speak any longer, and I was forced to leave him, as his utterance had failed; and go on to the next man, who was at a very short distance from the spot where the aged person stood.

The third object of my attention was very different in his appearance from the others who were employed (as they were in various methods) in the same long and cheerless room. There was on this man the visible stamp of innate gentility. The most indifferent spectator could not gaze upon him for a minute without being aware that he had once moved in a circle higher than

that usually denominated respectable. You might have dressed him in a vest of the coarsest russet, or in the apparel which distinguishes a person as belonging to a particular trade or calling, let that calling be of ever so humble a nature, and yet he would still have been and looked a gentleman.

There are many whom, if it were our will to array in kingly robes, and to decorate with gold and jewels, would still be conspicuously and undeniably vulgar. There is an old and very correct saying, that "a poet is born, not made;" and this adage holds equally true in regard to a gentleman. The movement of the eye, the raising of the hand, the tone of voice in which a commonplace sentence is delivered, can affix the honourable appellation of a patrician, or the less enviable one of a plebeian, to the individual who moves or speaks.

But to return from my digression. The third man I noticed was a tall well-featured man, about fifty years of age. He was leaning against the wall with a saddened and pensive countenance; and at the same time that it was thus melancholy, it had none of that savageness which makes so many men whose hopes have failed of fulfilment, and whose prospects have been darkened over by a wintry cloud. He grieved as a gentleman (if I may be allowed such an expression): there was evidently no likelihood of hearing from him curses and execrations upon those whom he might imagine to have ill-used him, or childish whisperings, such as often come from the desperate and the despondent.

He knew in his own heart that "a man's a man for a' that;" and sorrow did not make him mean, though it made him little. One might have fancied such a man, with his high yet gentle bearing, unable to stand up among the rougher and colder tempers with whom he came in contact. The wind which wafted along another's boat was sufficient to overturn his; the sun which raised the flowers in the garden of another, scorched and withered his plants. In his trials of skill with his fellow-men, one might have conceived him (albeit from no lack of intelligence) proving ever the loser. One might have supposed him like to one engaged in that sad resource of the miserable called the "solitary game," which might well be termed "the game of wretchedness," a lonely, yet a ruinous one. In this the board is marked out in squares similar to those upon a board for draughts, and of an even number; then, picture him employed upon it, and wherever he put his mark, a blank following next to it—he proceeding in a similar manner and with a similar result, at length the whole thing ending with a final blank.

As he leaned against the wall, with his hands folded and his dark eyes bent upon the ground, he looked not unlike those classical figures which we see in alto-relievo at the foot of a monument. There was the same calmness, the same paleness, the same immoveability. I was almost

ashamed to disturb him—pauper although he now was—and felt myself his inferior as I regarded him, although I was certainly his superior so far as mere money was concerned. I must do myself the justice, however, to declare that I was never foolish enough to have any feelings of pomposity in consequence of my possession of a few pounds more than another : if I have ever shown my pride, it has been on points, if not of a more justifiable, at least of a less vulgar character.

I could not help bowing as I approached him in a similar manner to that in which I should have greeted an equal of my own order. He looked at me quite astonished at this mark of politeness—which indeed was a little out of place in a Union Workhouse—because an inmate thereof might have thought that it was done out of jocularly, and with a wish to ridicule him, and not, as it really was intended, as an act of deserved consideration. He however returned the salutation in a very proper way—not either with the servility usually shown by persons in reduced circumstances, or with the stiffness of some who desire to show to all the world that their manly independence remains the same as ever it did, although poverty has come upon them.

I made some commonplace remarks to him about the weather, or some other of the usual topics of conversation which furnish themes for everyday dialogues,—and he answered in a similar strain. I then made some observation which called for an opinion from him ; and I was very gratified to find how very just and proper his opinions were : indeed, upon every matter which I could broach—whether of Literature, Politics, Morals, or the Fine Arts—he was well qualified to talk with a much wiser and more learned man than he who then conversed with him. I could not help being surprised to find that a person with such varied resources, and with such a gentlemanly deportment, was doomed to be the inmate of a village workhouse.

At length I observed to him that I was sure, from his whole appearance and style of speech, that he had once been a gentleman in rank, and had moved in the circle of life corresponding thereto.

He meekly and quietly replied, “ I have, Sir.”

“ And you must feel distressed and disgusted at your present position ?”

“ I dislike it, Sir ; from my heart I dislike it : but I have the consolation of knowing that it arises from no fault of my own.”

“ That is indeed a blessing ; and it is one which (I grieve to say it) many in similar circumstances to yours do not possess ; for poverty frequently follows upon extravagance, and is but the effect of which the other has been the acting cause.”

“ I am well aware, Sir, that such is the fact ; and I often sigh that those who do not really know my circumstances may include me among those to whom this is applicable.”

"And is it a liberty in me to ask how you came to be reduced to the state in which I now behold you?"

"It is from a very simply explained cause, Sir—loss of health. I was left an orphan in very early youth, and with but slight means to give me even the opportunity of commencing any business for myself."

"Your father was probably in one of the professions? in which, unhappily, men often devote their time and their talents to very little pecuniary purpose,—and die, leaving their offspring none the better for their arduous duties and eminent attainments."

"Such was my father's case: he was a barrister, who failed in his efforts to gain practice, and at length, worn out by fatigue and disappointment, his health and life became victims to this vain struggle."

"And at what time of life did you seek a livelihood?"

"I gained a clerkship in a large town, and managed, by working laboriously and eating sparingly, to keep up a decent appearance. As you may readily suppose, Sir, I married; for such is the wish of every man who has not money enough for his own actual wants."

"I believe this wish for marriage is very general, and in my opinion it is a very laudable one. The rich seem to have as much inclination as the poor to participate in its sweets."

"Very often, Sir, indeed; but still the poor do so more than the rich: for those who have fewer joys of fortune and fame more earnestly crave the pleasures and endearments of affection."

"I went on so for some time, after perhaps ten years of servitude getting 'a rise,' as it is called by mercantile people, of five shillings per week, such a rise being considered as a very high flight of generosity. It surely is a melancholy and miserable existence to have to be at your appointed post by nine o'clock every morning, and remain till seven every evening, continually working at the same dull books, and copying the same description of business-letters. There is no variation in the round of duty—no sunshine to cross the path over which ledgers and day-books, bills of lading and invoices, have cast their gloomy shade. Such a life crushes the mind, and lowers it to do the work of a mere mechanical engine."

"But after many years passed in the same dull course, I fell sick: a kind of decline came over me; and I lost, at once, appetite for food, the power of sleeping at night, and the wish for exercise, or indeed even for movement. I continued for some time to follow my occupation, in spite of this state of failing health and vigour: but at length it would not do; I was forced to stay at home, sometimes for one day, sometimes for two days in a week; and at last, most reluctantly, I was compelled to resign my appointment, and consent to be considered as a confirmed invalid. When I did so, what chance had I of support? My poor wife was of too delicate

a frame to do anything for herself, and much less to provide for her husband also."

"And what *did* you do?"

"It is difficult to say what we did *not* do—for we even stooped to solicit alms of those with whom we had formerly associated as friends and equals. But whatever we did, it proved fruitless—at least to any permanent degree: so then we judged it right (in fact, the only course) to return to our own quiet village, and seek there the aid of those relations of our own who might still be residing at our native place."

"We went back;—and it was a cheering sight to see once more the old chestnut-trees and the rustic porches, the village church and the Sunday-schoolhouse: all were dear, for all spoke of by-gone days."

"And did you find several of your own connexions at your village home?"

"Some few, Sir: many had gone to settle elsewhere, and others had died or married away; but there were some few. Yet there were but four or five of them who had the ability to help us, for the majority of them had large families to support, and the means of the remaining one or two were well-nigh as limited as our own. Yet I must do them the justice to say that what they could do they did do, and that, by straining their means to the utmost, they managed to do a little for us, and raise between them sufficient to grant us a few shillings a-week, which sum was enough for our small requirements."

"Of course this could not last long?"

"Of course it could not, Sir; for I should have completely ruined them if it had gone on for many months together. So one by one they were obliged to relinquish their weekly help, and I was left with my wife almost in a starving state. The only thing was for us to come into the workhouse, which we did, and in which we have now for a long period remained."

"And may I ask how the treatment of this place suits you?"

"Sadly—sadly, indeed, Sir: it is a heartbreaking thing for me to be within the walls of this establishment; and I am convinced my wife finds it every whit as bad as I do: it is indeed lamentable."

"Of course the fare and the lodging are different to what you were early used to; very much altered, doubtless, from those you partook of when you were a happy child: but those things would not, I think, weigh heavily on *you*."

"Oh, Sir! it is not these things I care about; these are minor evils, which a man, and a gentleman especially, should not regard. He is unworthy the name of a Philosopher, and he who is not a Philosopher is a lover of folly; for all men have their attachment either to what is sensible or to what is senseless. The bare couch, if things were so bad as that, and

the morsel of bread, ought not to grieve a man for whom a little grain, and the cold earth, are sufficient board and bed to supply the necessities of his nature."

"And of what do you complain?"

"Of the want of kindness and courtesy of manner. This is infinitely worse to a person of sensitive feelings than any mere deprivation of bodily comforts. They know that I have been a gentleman, and yet they treat me as if I had always been a pauper, and a willing beggar too,—a beggar by profession. They look at me as they might look at one who, with the means to work, wanted the inclination. It is this that galls me, and that makes me sit for the long day through in pensive grief, and sigh over the miseries of a union workhouse. To-day I am even more dispirited than usual, from something which befell me yesterday."

"And what might that be?" I inquired, in a somewhat anxious manner.

"It is about the clergyman, Sir,—the clergyman whose duty it is to attend here, and who is called the chaplain, I believe."

"What could he have done then to annoy or offend you? I should suppose that the clergyman is one of the most popular men amongst those connected with the workhouses of this country."

"And ours might be so, Sir; but, unfortunately, the fault of the gentleman connected with this establishment is, that he has so great a wish to keep on good terms with the influential people here. You doubtless know, Sir, that it is the office of the chaplain to visit those who are labouring under illness, and in the struggles of approaching dissolution: to read prayers, also, at particular times is his duty. Such are his peculiar lines of duty. But I should suppose that it would be the wish of one coming as a Minister of the Gospel that he might also be the means of bringing comfort of another kind to those who stand in need of it. Now, Sir, from such a belief, when I had failed to get kinder treatment—that is, a behaviour suited to a man who has known better days, and mixed with higher people than the usual inmates of a workhouse—when my requests to the various other persons, whom opportunity had brought before me, had been unheard—I resolved to stop the clergyman next time he came near where I was, and unburthen my mind to him, and ask his support in the matter about which I have been speaking to you."

"And yesterday you saw him?"

"Yesterday morning, Sir, he was requested to come and see a poor man who was very ill, and whom it was not supposed likely would recover. Accordingly the chaplain came, and had a long conversation with him, and he appeared to be very earnest about it. Of course I did not hear what he said, or what took place, indeed, on either side; but after he had finished his dialogue with the man, and as he was about to leave the

room, (at the further end of which he had been talking with the sick man,) I took the liberty to detain the chaplain by gently stepping up to him, and stating that I had something about which I was desirous to speak with him, and in which I was sure he would be ready to serve me."

"And I should hope he did not refuse to attend to you, when you thus addressed him?"

"Oh, no! Sir; I have nothing to blame him for on that head; he is ready enough to hear what any one has to say; and that's a great good too,—for many people, as soon as a poor man begins to address them, desire him to stop them some other day, when they have more leisure: but the chaplain is not like them; he wanted to know of me whether I was ill or not, and whether I wished him to read with me. I told him that I was thankful to say that I was not urgently ill, and I mentioned that it was not his spiritual assistance that I just then craved of him, although it always gave me pleasure to hear him speak on religious subjects, and to find how attentive others were also. 'Then why do you stop me?' he asked again. 'Because I have something I am very anxious to say' 'Well! I am ready to hear you; pray proceed.' So on I then went, Sir, and described to the chaplain how sad it was for one who had been a gentleman to be bawled to, and to be domineered over—to be ordered to hurry, and not to stand dawdling about all day. I also added, Sir, that I had reasoned with those who treated me in such a manner, and had endeavoured, by good-speaking, to induce them to act in another way, but that all my entreaties, and all my efforts to conciliate them, had utterly failed to accomplish the object I had in view. I said that, as a gentleman himself, he would know how to appreciate these woes of another who had been educated as such.

"'I am very sorry,' said he, 'but, you see, it would not be right for me to appear in the business; it would seem like intruding forward. I am sure you will see it in the same point of view, and agree with me.' I told him that I could not see it so; for that, as one who held a most responsible office in the establishment, it seemed to come peculiarly within his province to help me. 'Why, you observe, my good friend,' he continued again, 'I should gain ill-feeling towards myself, and I should be looked upon in a different way to that in which I now am by the authorities here. I wish to be on good terms with them all, that affairs may go on smoothly, and that the life within the walls may thus be as pleasing an one as is practicable.' 'But, Sir,' said I, still anxious not to be foiled in my purpose, 'do you not think (pardon me for speaking so, for I do not wish to offend you, or to be disrespectful in any way) that, as the clergyman of this house, it is in some degree your place to see that the sorrows of the poor within its precincts are attended to?' 'The fact is,' he answered,

‘I do not feel myself, as it were, called upon — not called upon to interfere in such a way.’ ‘How, Sir! not called upon?’ I cried, losing all self-control at those words,—‘called upon! Do you not think that as a clergyman you are called upon, by every precept of the religion you teach,



and by every vow which you took when you entered the church, to exert yourself to the utmost for your fellow-men? Why, Sir,’ I continued, losing all discretion in my anger, ‘why do you come here at all, if you refuse to assist those who really require to be assisted?’ ‘I come here,’ said he, turning away from me, ‘I come here to attend to spiritual wants, not temporal ones; and those who expect that I can interfere about the latter must meet with disappointment; it is not my duty—in fact, it is departing from my own line of duty—to mind temporal complaints.’ So saying, the chaplain turned upon his heel and left the room. And now, Sir, therefore, I labour under the same trouble as before. I never ask a stranger (in fact, it is very rarely I see one) to assist me in this way, because I know that the wishes of one unconnected with the establishment would be fruitless. But I do exert every effort to get some remedy from those who hold situations here; and the answer is ever in the negative. But of all from whom I hoped for aid, the chaplain was the best, and after all he failed to help me; he would not attend to a temporal sorrow, though in doing so he might trust he would additionally incline him whom he aided to learn from him the Words of Life, which it is his peculiar province to expound.”

The man threw himself upon a bench, and looked in profound trouble,

suffering under an evil, which, to his sensitive mind, was far worse than the humble style of provisions, or the stern regimen, which he was compelled to be under. I told him that the next time I came there I would try what I could do, by speaking with the head officers of the establishment; but he shook his head, as much as to say that my exertions would prove vain. I added that I would now have spoken to the head authorities, but that I had not time, as I wished to see the room where the women assembled, and to converse with one or two of them, before quitting the workhouse, and the day began to wear away. I had also, I said, some miles to go to reach my home. He bade me farewell in a very friendly manner, and I now went to seek access to the long-room where the women were collected.

It was, of course, very proper that, as a person unknown, (in fact, had I been ever so well known there, it would have been only what was proper,)—it was right that, before I intruded into the room of the females, I should have the sanction of the matron. I determined, therefore, to seek her out, and, accordingly, inquired where her small apartment was to be found.

It was an easy thing to find the matron's room: all my readers know that the residences of the greater and more powerful are easily known to, and (if possible) extensively visited by the poor and the suppliant; and if this be true in all cases, very especially so is it in a workhouse. There is a feeling in its humble inhabitants of discontent against those above themselves, and a desire to find fault with the luxuries their betters in station enjoy. The snuggery of the matron, accordingly, was one of the objects of dislike as well as curiosity to the majority. I was, therefore, quickly directed to the room of the matron, and there she was, sitting in an easy chair, dozing after the fatigues which she had doubtless had to undergo, in the very responsible and laborious office she fulfilled. There was a look of comfort and ease about this little chamber to which no one could object who was not a senseless blamer of all who are in any way comfortable in their circumstances, even through their own efforts to earn a subsistence of a respectable character for themselves. Yet I could not be surprised that any of the paupers, if by chance they came into the room, should feel amazed and angry at seeing the great difference of the way in which it was furnished to that in which their own scantily filled and cold-looking apartments were rendered habitable. I walked into the centre of the room, and endeavoured, in various ingenious ways, to rouse the poor matron,—by overturning a small table on which books were placed in regular order,—by throwing down the fire-irons, (which are always ready to make a noise upon the slightest hint being given to them to that effect,) &c. &c. These methods at length succeeded, and the good woman started from her seat and began to apologize, believing at the moment that it was one of the Guardians who had honoured her with a visit.

Having undeceived her in this matter, (for her fear that she had appeared to be ceasing from her duties had made her almost blind, so as to prevent her being able to discover whether she knew, or did not know the present intruder,) she got much calmer, and was capable of understanding more clearly the object by which I had been drawn thither.

"Oh! yes, Sir," she said in answer to my application for leave to go into the long-room under her charge; "I am sure that you will be charmed with the way things are conducted. I have suggested several little improvements to the gentlemen of the Board, upon which they have been pleased to act; and the chairman said to me, 'Why, Mrs. Jones! you deserve to be a Poor-Law Guardian yourself.' That was an honour, Sir, was it not?"

Gratified with the thought of her own talents, Mrs. Jones led the way to the long-room, which was just such another as that I had before visited. Some few women were walking about, others sitting in various directions; and the first of them who attracted my attention was a person of about fifty years of age. She was by no means more woe-begone in her aspect than many who surrounded her, for all of them were sufficiently uncomfortable in their appearance to draw the eye of a stranger upon them. How shall I describe them? It would be hard, indeed, for me to attempt it; but I can easily refer my readers to the unhappy-faced females who are to be discovered in every alley of London, in every manufactory of our business-towns, and in too many even of the lanes of our country villages. But that which especially drew my attention to the woman I have alluded to was her look of strong indignation,—a look which it is scarcely possible for one who feels the sentiment of anger to repress. She was talking to another woman, who stood near to her, and it was plain to me that she spoke in friendship and in kindness towards her; yet the fierceness of her eye, the compression of her lip, and the scowl upon her brow, would have told a different tale to a less critical and particular observer. Her memory told her of some person towards whom she entertained a bitter animosity, and she was brooding over her real or fancied wrongs, at the same time as she could discourse in an affable manner with the nearest neighbour who was ready to converse with her.

I inquired of Mrs. Jones whether I was at liberty to speak to this poor woman, as I presumed that I ought to obtain leave of the matron previous to so doing. Mrs. Jones smiled, gratified at her opinion being thus consulted, and said—

"Oh yes! by all means,—certainly,—if you like; but I should advise you not though."

"Why not?" was the natural rejoinder.

"Why, you see, Sally Wilks is out of humour; and when any of them get in that way, it's anything else but fun to try and trouble them."

"But I should only say a few words in a civil way to her, and I should think she would not dislike that; it is not as if I were going to find any fault."

"Oh very true! very true! you can speak by all means; but when a woman is cross, I don't envy the gentleman who says anything."

I made up my mind, notwithstanding Mrs. Jones's caution, to brave the danger, and went up and made some remark to the effect that she could most probably reply to some two or three questions I was anxious to have answered. She immediately responded by remarking, with the utmost good-humour, that "she would be glad to tell me anything within her power." Yet for all this, and in spite of her mild words and soft tone towards myself, there was that undying flashing of the eye, and frown upon the forehead, which showed that she had not, even for a moment, ceased to remember the wrong under which she laboured, or thought she laboured, and that she determined to give vent to her wrath whenever the opportunity for which she longed in spirit should have arrived—the moment of revenge to which her anxious hopes still turned.

"I was wishing to know how you liked the way in which things are conducted here. I am making a kind of tour of inquiry, and I think I can better gain information from persons who are within such houses than from the general descriptions which I may gather from others who are, perhaps, but vaguely acquainted, themselves, with the circumstances of them."

"Is it about *this house* that you wish to know, Sir?" said she quickly; and the colour mounted like fire to her cheeks, and assured me, without needing to say a single syllable, what her own views were of the management of that particular building.

Mrs. Jones looked towards me, as much as to say, "I told you how it would be; what a madman you are to speak to a woman at all, when she looks gloomy, and fit for a storm to burst out!"

"It is about *this house*, certainly, that I am anxious to ask you, for you can speak upon that subject from personal knowledge."

"I *can* speak of it, and I *will* speak of it too, Sir, if all the soldiers in the world were here to stop me; for it's a sin and a shame what goes on to poor people in these places."

"Now, Sally," interposed Mrs. Jones,—“now, Sally, don't you speak in that wholesale way of things; for I'm sure there's a good deal of kindness shown, at least by some of the managers here, and those the highest ones, too.”

"Oh! I don't mean to find fault with you, Ma'am, by any means," answered Sally, "for you've always been very good."

Mrs. Jones smiled, and turned towards me, as much as to say, "Sally is not so wrong after all, I must say."

"What have you then to find fault with, Sally?—what is it that grieves you?"

"It is about my dear husband, who is now dead: he was murdered here, Sir—I am sure that he was: if ever murder was committed, I am sure that it was in that case."

"Oh! for shame!" said Mrs. Jones, interrupting her; "how can you think of using such a word as that?—Who do you think, Sir" (turning towards me), "would ever have an idea of killing any one while he was in here?"

"Of course not; but I suppose Sally Wilks (is not that her name?) does not mean actually murdered, like a highway-robber would kill a person, by a pistol or a knife; but suffered to die from neglect,—from not being sufficiently attended to when he was ill; or in some other way, perhaps, such as by but little food when he needed much to support his strength,—letting him sink, as she supposes: it's only *neglect*, of course, that she means."

"It's much more than that, Sir—a great deal more than that:—I say *my* husband was murdered, but I believe every woman's husband, who dies here, is *neglected*—and neglected too while he is hearty and well."

"You see, Sir," said Mrs. Jones, drawing me towards her, "you see, Sir, that she speaks a great deal too strong."

"I am quite sure of that—but perhaps she has some grounds for complaint, although not for such a serious one as she brings. So, if you have no objection, I will have a little conversation with her upon the subject."

"Oh! you are quite at liberty, Sir—only, pray don't believe *all* she tells you; for her heart is very sad, and so she thinks worse of things than they really are."

"I quite understand that, and I will take care to make allowances for all that excitement, before I credit any of the story I may hear from her.—Will you let me hear, Sally, of what you have cause to complain?"

"My husband was, as you may guess, Sir, a very poor man; else he would never have been here, I can promise you, for we always hated such places as these, and used to say we would rather lie on a dust-heap than in one of their crazy beds. When he was well enough to earn a shilling for himself, we struggled on, as you may call it; but when he got ill, what was to be done? It's said, you know, that 'hunger will break through stone walls;' and it must be bad indeed, when it will break through them to get into such a cold dull place as this is. It's a horrid place, isn't it?"

"My good Mrs. Wilks, leave off your invectives against the workhouse, and let me know the facts; as you know that it cannot be pleasant to Mrs. Jones to hear the establishment with which she is connected spoken against; neither can it prove the truth of your complaints, that you make such very strong statements."

" Ah ! Sir, if you knew all about these places, you would talk too. But I will go on :—When my husband got so ill, there was a great talk then about what he should do :—the Doctor came, and then he shook his head and said he could not tell what to do—and he went away. Next the Minister came, and said he was surprised to find the man so ill, as he had heard nothing about it before, and he didn't know there was any one so sick in his parish ;—and the relieving officer came, and said he supposed we must come into the house, for that he couldn't give him any money or food out of it. So it was fixed at last that my husband was to go into the house : but he was much too weak to walk there, and I was not able to move him ; so that it was a hard matter to find out how he was to be carried."

" It surely was no hard matter to find a man willing to lend a vehicle for such a purpose."

" It was hard, Sir, because so few of the common people about this part can afford to keep a cart, or anything of that kind ; but we did manage somehow to find a man who could do it, and would do it, for us. Proud and happy were we to find him, as if we had got a coach and six—and it was only a poor little donkey-cart, scarce fit to carry turnips. It was a good thing and a kind thing for him to lend it to us, for he might perhaps have earned a shilling with it, instead of letting my husband go in it from charity. He took"—

My reader will, I hope, pardon me for omitting to let him know what was the substance of the woman's next sentence, for a remark she had lately made had drawn away my attention, and I fell into a fit of meditation, even while her voice was still to be heard.

The woman had said that she " was proud and happy " to get even so humble a conveyance for her husband ; and such an observation had called up to memory a consideration I have very often entertained. When people happen during a walk to see any poor body " getting a cast " (as it is denominated), they are accustomed to think directly how lucky and happy is the traveller. But I ever look at him with a far different sentiment : I should be disposed to call that one happy whom I beheld slowly *walking*, or rather *standing*, to view the countless beauties of God's Creation, and to derive health and instruction from every breeze that wafted by him, and from every flower that blossomed in the wayside hedge ;—but I should never denominate one happy because his limbs were too overweared to allow him to do so, and who only transitorily beheld nature's charms, for the sake of obtaining bodily ease—such as it is—and a support less than his vanquished powers required.

When I aroused me from the reverie into which I had fallen, Sally Wilks was narrating a scene which had occurred in the workhouse upon the arrival of her husband, Mrs. Jones supposing that Sally was unheard by me, as she saw that I was absent in mind, although present in body. It was the

“brutality” (I quote Sally’s words) of one of the nurses, which she was describing; and as I perceived that her language was too strong, I again urged upon her the propriety of more temperate words, and remarked



that I could not credit that the nurses would behave so badly whilst so respectable a person as Mrs. Jones was there to superintend them.

“That’s very good, Sir,” said Sally, “if she was always with them. When she’s in the room they’re as soft as anything; but let her back be turned, and they are almost as hard as stones.”

“Let me hear then, Sally, and I shall be able to judge afterwards whether you have kept to facts, without exaggeration.”

“The day my husband came to this place he was worse than he generally was; he was coughing as if he would kill himself, and was as weak as a feather. I was quite sad to see him in such a way; and I was quite grieved, too, to have to move him to such a house as that we are now in, you know. It was no wonder then, you’ll say, if, when I moved him out of the cart at the workhouse-door, I was crying, and that, all the time I helped to carry him upstairs to the room where he was to be, I was crying as well. You don’t blame me for that, do you, Sir?”

“I never blame any one for affection, my good woman; I would rather praise them for it.”

“I looked at my husband, and I saw how pale he was,—much more than usual,—and he was always pale enough, and ill enough, I am sure. This nurse, Sir, I have been speaking of, she looked at him, and then at me, and then at him, and so on, from one to the other. At last she says to

me, 'Well! he's looking ill enough, isn't he? You won't have to mind him much longer, I can tell you.' Think, Sir, of such words as these used to my dear, dear husband that I loved as my life! You must guess that I could not answer her; and whilst I was so still, the nurse went on again.—'I have been used to these things, and I know death when it stares one in the face as well as anybody. You may soon look out for a second husband.' I can't bear to think of this nurse with any patience at all."

"I suppose you told the matron about this; *she* is evidently not a hard-hearted person, and I dare say she put things to rights, and prevented the repetition of such coarse and unfeeling words."

"That's what I blame her for, Sir. I did tell her all about it, and she said directly that she dare say I thought that the woman spoke unfeelingly, but that she didn't mean it in that way at all, and that I ought to make allowances for her, as she had a great deal to go through. Now that way of speaking is all very good and kind; but for my part, I think it would have been much better if the matron had found out whether the nurse really was unfeeling or not; and if she was, had forbid her to do so in future. If she didn't like the nurse to be thought hard of, why didn't she prevent her from deserving to be? for the poorest sort have hearts and feelings, as well as the best-fed and best-clothed, and are all flesh and blood alike, you know."

I saw the reasonableness of what Sally remarked, and could, therefore, only coincide with her last observation, though I exculpated Mrs. Jones from any intentional carelessness.

"But I will tell you now about the last of it, Sir, and it was that I was speaking about when you first came into the room; and it is bad enough to make a stone speak, I'm sure. You know it is the rule of these places that man and wife are not to be together; and so, though we came in at the same time, we were never allowed to see each other. I managed to hear, now and then, how my husband went on, but it was no wonder to me that, with such treatment as I was sure he would have, I heard that he kept getting worse and worse,—sinking more and more. But at last the news came to me that my husband was dead; and what a blow it was to me, (though I feared it would end so all along,) anybody who loved another and has lost them can tell. It must come as a *shock* at the last, even when for months we have been looking for it. But, Sir, I had one favour shown me after his death. I was not then kept from seeing him: they seemed to think, then, that the rule might be done away with, and man and wife be allowed to be together. I suppose, Sir, they thought this might be allowed by the head gentlemen, and no fault found. I went in and looked upon my husband, from whom I had been kept away to the last. I began to ask the people about if they could tell me how my husband came to die so soon as he did, for, though I knew he was very ill, (for the matter of that,) I did not think he was so near death. It was what they told me

that makes me say he was murdered, and so you'll say, too, when you come to hear it."

"Pray tell me, then, Mrs. Wilks;—but I do not promise to speak in such strong terms: you're under such excitement, you can't judge fairly."

"I was told, Sir, that my husband was thought to be very, very ill by the Doctor, and he gave orders that my husband should be kept very warm in bed, and that no draught should be allowed to come to him. It was very cold, blowing weather then, just the time for any one to get a cold, and when the wind seemed to come in at every corner. For a long time my husband had never been taken out of bed, when all at once it struck the nurse that my husband had better be washed;—why, just at that time, nobody in the world can tell: yet, when these kind of women make up their minds to do a thing, they will do it at all hazards."

"Well! but that is acting from whim, and not from reason."

"I knew you would agree with me, Sir, as everybody must. But you don't know the kind of woman that the nurse is I am speaking of. Well, Sir, she had made up her mind to wash my husband, and she came and told him so. He begged her not to disturb him, for he was so ill all over that he felt as if he should die if he was moved; and the fright, too, that he should be touched, when the Doctor said he ought not to be, frightened him almost out of his life. He told her what the Doctor had said, but she told him again that she was sure he would have changed his mind if he had been round that day, to see how much better he was. It was in vain for him to tell her he was *no* better,—for you know, Sir, that doctors and nurses always think they can judge better of this than the sick can. So my husband was moved out of bed, and was put into a hard chair that was in the middle of the room, that he might be washed. Some of the sick people in the same room cried out against it, but it was no use for them to speak, for they were ordered to hold their tongues, and mind their own business.

"So he was moved out; but no sooner, Sir, was he there, than he found the east wind blowing upon him and stabbing him like daggers. The Doctor had ordered him to be kept warm there;—he was on a hard open chair, with such a wind as that!

"The nurse told him he couldn't feel it, and that the Doctor did not wish him to be kept *too close*. Think of that—*too close*, Sir! when the wind was fit to blow away part of the house. He really cried, I am told, to be put back again; but the nurse was not to be put out of her way, and so she kept on. The door was open all the time, and he begged her to shut it, at any rate, and stop the draught;—but she did not like that at all, it was not the custom to shut it, and it would be putting things all wrong. So she went on, and my poor husband was sinking lower and lower: at last he fainted; and *then* they put him back into the bed he had been wishing for so long.

“ From that time he kept getting worse and worse : at last he died—a natural death, the Doctor called it ! And the nurse never thought what she had done could have hurt him ; for she said that a person was always kept in better health by being kept clean, and such washing could have done no harm : but she forgot that my husband was in a very bad state, ready to catch cold directly at anything, and needing warmth and comfort for his recovery. He died—the death of a parish pauper—of one whose wishes are never thought of—whose pains are never cared for—whose life is not counted worthy of a sigh or a pain. He died, Sir,—and it gave the nurse one less to look after, and the parish had one less to support.”

“ And you think, then, that he really died from the washing, do you ? ”

“ Who can think otherwise, Sir ? Suppose a rich man to be dealt with as my husband was—what would be said ? Why, that he was murdered—cruelly murdered. It would be told everywhere that no regard had been shown to the orders of the Doctor—that the sick man had been exposed, when the wind was blowing strong and cold, to all its bitterness—that his prayers and cries had not been minded—that the very door was left open which could easily have been shut. As it was, what was said ? That it was proper the nurses should wash the patients now and then—that no doubt it was supposed the air would cheer him up—that it seemed he called out, it is true ; but that it was not known that he did so because he wished to be put into bed—it might be from his own sensations. You will see, Sir, that the poor are not treated like the rich—at least, in these places.”

“ I wonder if they are in any place,” thought I ; but I endeavoured, as the kindest mode I could now pursue, to persuade her that her husband had not been unkindly dealt by.

“ Look, Sir, at that woman,” she answered me, “ who is now standing at the right side of the room : she can tell you how she thinks the poor are used here, if you will take the trouble to ask her.”

“ I will certainly do that, for I came here expressly to learn how matters were conducted ; but I fear, from her look, I shall have but a bad account.”

So saying, I crossed the room, and, as I did so, the eyes of my friend, with whom I had been in conversation, followed me very closely ;—anxious, no doubt, she was, that I should find her own account corroborated.

The person whom I had moved from her to speak to was about sixty years of age, and had, I must confess, a somewhat unprepossessing aspect ; for the extreme displeasure she was brooding over displayed itself in her whole countenance. She was now evidently a sulky woman : her sulkiness might probably have been produced by the ill treatment of others ; but, let that be as it may, it was now visibly, and very disagreeably, her ruling characteristic.

I spoke to her, but she did not wish to answer me. She turned away,

as if to move to some more retired situation,—when I told her plainly the reason of my coming to the workhouse, together with what had passed between the woman whom I last talked with and myself, and the remark which had been the cause of my desiring to introduce myself to her; adding that if, however, she disliked to hold any discourse with me, I would not remain.

She very much softened at this; for she had before considered me as one of “the gentry,” who had enlisted together, as she supposed, to injure and oppress her, and others similarly situated.

“I can answer, Sir, anything you would like to ask, I dare say; I have no wish to be uncivil to anybody.”

“Thank you. Will you, then,—for I like to come to the point of my inquiry at once,—will you tell me what you think of the treatment of those who dwell here?”

“Of the *paupers*?—the *paupers*, Sir, you mean: that’s the name the gentlemen always give them.”

“But I should like to find some pleasanter name to call the residents here by. What do you think of the treatment?”

“It cannot well be worse—it cannot well be worse. What’s the good of talking about it? The more people talk, the worse things get; and the more fault’s found, the less it’s altered. So that’s enough.”

“If they are made no better, they will not be made worse by anything we may say, for I will take care not to do any harm by repeating anything that may be said.”

“Well, then! you’re just unlike the others that talk with us; for they come round, and they hope we’re happy, and they ask what we have to find fault with; and then they go away and say we’re too well taken care of, and that, if we go on as we’re going, we shall never want to go out of the house again as long as we live. That’s what they call going about to see how things are carried on.”

“I am no paid Inspector. My present interference is with a good motive; and if I fail in aiding you, it will be from want of ability, and not from want of inclination.”

“Well, you speak fair enough: but really, to tell you the truth, there is so much kind saying, and so much unkind doing, in the world, that one is obliged to think twenty times before one opens one’s mouth.”

“I do not blame you for caution;—but may I *now* ask what you complain of so much, (as I am told you do,) in the management of things here?”

“I find fault, Sir, with everything,—with nobody being kind to us, or doing us any kindness. We never see a soul that seems to care if we live or die: it’s all a matter of duty that we should be kept in here,—but as to how we like it, nobody cares to ask or to find out.”

“There must surely be some one now and then who appears to be more good?”

"None of those who belong to the place, I can say with a safe mind: they are all out after one pattern, as a woman might say."

"But perhaps there are some, who do not belong here, but call here now and then, that are different in their manners and intentions. The world is not quite so black as you endeavour to paint it to me."

"Well, I can call to mind a lady who came here some months ago, about Christmas-time, and wanted to see over all the building; and she was a very nice lady, and stopped and chatted with us as pleasant as possible, and we were all quite sorry that she was gone after she had left: and when she was just going she said that she thought we behaved very well, and that she should do something to show that that was her way of thinking. Ah! she was a very good, kind lady, and we were all grieved enough when she went away that day. It was not so much, near, for the sake of what we should get from her, but it was her way of speaking, and all that, that made us quite fond of her all of a sudden."

"And what did this lady do after all? Perhaps she forgot her promise?"

"No, that she didn't! That was not her way at all. She was very different from a great many I know—and those some of my own relations and oldest friends too—who have promised to do a mighty deal for me all my life almost, and have never done anything at all. Even at the worst, when I was obliged to come into the workhouse, I called upon several of them who can keep their servants and comfortable houses, and who had told me to come to them whenever I wanted anything done for me;—and after all, there was a cold chill of a welcome for me, I can tell you. Oh! it was then that things had altered since they spoke with me before, and that they didn't know what they might come to themselves if things did not look up. But this lady—she did keep her promise."

"And what did this lady do for you?"

"She sent a certain sum of money,—I'm sure I don't know how much it was, but it was a very great sum,—and she said that she wished it might be laid out for us in something to make us more comfortable and cheerful and happy at Christmas."

"In what way do you mean 'more comfortable?' Was it in something to eat and drink? for that is the great way in which many people show their joy at Christmas-time."

"Why, Sir! it was with the old English fare, (as it is called,) that she wished us to be feasted;—with plum-pudding and roast-beef, and ale, to make us cheer up a little bit."

I could not forbear smiling at this.

"Is this then all," I cried, "that you have to complain of? If it is only the want of plum-pudding, I am afraid I cannot sympathize very deeply in your grief. I have known worse misfortunes than that."

"I don't know that it is so little after all, Sir; for it's not the eating or

the drinking that we—poor people—care about ; but it's the having something to look forward to as coming at a certain time to make a change in the every-day cares and sorrows."

" I must confess that there is a great deal of truth in that remark ; and that—without something to anticipate—the life of one in any rank of life would be intolerable."

" And there's another thing as well as that, that we mind about ; and that is, that we should be able to feel that we were mixing in the same pleasures as others, and that we were now and then treated as if we were people who were meant to have comforts as well as the rich, and to join at certain seasons in the gladness that is all about at those times."

" The whole of the matter is, then, I suppose, that your treat was forbidden."

" Yes, Sir, it was. First we heard it talked of that the lady had given a sum of money on purpose that we might keep Christmas ; and we kept looking forward to it, and hoping that Christmas would soon come round ; and then, just when we thought it was at hand, we were told that it was all forbidden. We took it as a very hard case—a very hard case indeed—for what harm could it have done ? You know it could have cost nothing to them, for the lady had given the money that was needed."

" I am quite at a loss to say what harm it could have done. But what was the reason given for the treat being withheld ? Did you ever hear why it was refused that you and the others should have the beef and pudding ?"

" They forbid them, Sir, as *luxuries* ; that was what they called them."

" Supposing they were luxuries ; what then ? Why should you not have luxuries, occasionally, as well as other people ?"

" They said, Sir, that those who have to pay for the poor in the workhouse—that have to keep them there—have not those things, and so we ought not to have them either ;—that's what they said. I wish, Sir, you could do something to make them act different. You seem to be disposed to make the poor more happy if you could do it ; and nobody knows what he can do in this world till he tries."

" I will try what I can do : to spend any money I may have to spare—and that is little enough—will effect no good ; for you have given me an instance that, when a sum is granted by one who wishes to befriend the workhouse poor, the Guardians can step in the way and make the gift of no avail. I must aim, then, to make the ruling powers more kindly affected towards those who are under their control, so that the donations of other men may turn to account. What I can do in this latter matter, I will do."

So saying, I parted from my companion. After this visit was over, I considered myself fully justified in speaking to my friend, at his own happy and favoured village, of the bad management and neglect which took place at one so near to him. I had not founded an opinion merely

upon the report of an individual. I had not rashly judged either that because the inmates of the workhouse were miserable, the rustics who enjoyed liberty were so also ; or that, because those who were not residents within its walls were in hunger and in sorrow, those who were within its domains were in the like misfortunes.

I had paid visits to many,— I had held conversations with many,—and from one and all did I find that affairs were not conducted as they ought to be, and that the hand of the reformer was needed to correct and to chasten. I was now ready, therefore, to consult with Vincent, and chose my usual period for doing so—viz. after dinner.

“ I believe, Vincent,” I began, “ I have now got all the evidence even you—slow to credit as you are—can require. It remains now for you to interfere, and see matters set to rights, as you said you would do when I could bring you the necessary proofs.”

“ Stop, stop,” answered Vincent, laughing,—“ not quite so fast, my good fellow. You are for drawing conclusions before we have settled our premises. How do you know, even now, that the village affairs are so ill arranged ?”

“ I can easily answer you that, although not in a very few words. I have been with the poor here, and the poor there, and the poor everywhere; and their voice is against the higher powers with one consent.”

I then recounted to him the various dialogues I had held, and the discontent and dislike which had displayed themselves in the faces of all the villagers. I stopped, with a feeling of triumph that I had set the business finally at rest in Vincent’s mind. At the termination of all, however, Vincent still looked incredulously.

“ Did you see any of the richer people ? Perhaps they would have told you differently.”

“ I do not doubt that for a moment ;—*very differently*, I am quite sure.”

“ You smile, but I am serious. There is an old saying, which I first learned in my Grammar at school, and which is well to be remembered in manhood—‘*Hear both sides.*’ If we do not do so, we shall never arrive at a right judgment, nor give a sentence according to equity.”

“ But, my dear Vincent, you would not, in truth, have me go and ask the Squire or the Clergyman, the Poor-Law Guardian or the Doctor, whether what was said against them was true. I cannot credit that he would give me a reply against himself ; and if he gave one in his own favour, should I be bound to trust to it ? The idea of such a questioning is absurd.”

“ I did not mean that you should ask them exactly in words ; but I meant that you might get into conversation with them, and you could then soon judge whether they really are as black as they are painted : we can do justice to any, only by doing justice to all.”

"I am not as sure as you seem to be that a little talking with a person shows his exact character and nature clearly. It is a very easy matter to throw a little benevolence into the tone or the manner,—to utter a few words of pity and compassion, whilst the heart remains as hard and as callous as a very rock. How often do we hear a man bring in words of religion into his every-day conversation, while all the while he cares less, perhaps, for religious things than the man who never, in such a way, mentions a sacred name, or a serious subject! I should never have formed a right judgment by a mere dialogue, had I attempted to do so."

"I differ very much from you in what you have said. It seems to me that there is no difficulty whatever in forming a correct estimate of any one by an acquaintance with him, however brief; although, doubtless, the longer it is, the more certain is the opinion formed. By mere words, I confess, nothing can be gained; that is, by a studied sentence or a meditated harangue: but by the occasional traits of character that *will* show themselves,—by the general style of the person, (so to speak,)—by the glance of the eye,—by the nature of the jokes he utters,—by his liveliness, and by his gravity,—I believe almost every information may be acquired. The practised look and the studied word show little; but the unguarded word, and the casual glance, which *will* come in, show a very great deal to those who study character, and seek to find out the real disposition."

"Well, I will allow your theory to be right—but how am I to get introduced to those richer men? They are not to be so easily met with as the outcast and miserable."

"It is no very difficult thing to get introduced to them—their various professions and occupations afford facilities for your doing so."

"What, then, Vincent, would you have me go and ask for parochial relief, or affirm that my leg wanted setting, for the sake of having some intercourse with these persons?"

"No, no! not so bad as that; but you can make inquiries into some matter connected with their avocations, and thus introduce yourself to their notice. Take any instance among the richer people here, and tell me, from *personal* knowledge of him, that he justifies the accounts you have heard from the poor, and I will then at once exert myself, as far as my ability may go, to get the faults rectified."

"I shall be happy, indeed, to go and see anybody, after your late promise; for I know that when you give your promise to any one, it will be literally and energetically performed. But there is a little difficulty, it must be allowed, in my first making the acquaintance of these greater people, as I cannot very well go and ask the advice of a doctor without acting upon it, or make an imaginary pauper for the sake of calling a Poor-Law Guardian's attention to him."

"I will endeavour," said Vincent, "to find out some more simple method,

if you will first inform me which, of all those you have heard of, you would most like to have introduced to you."

"Oh! the Squire, by all means," I answered,—“the jovial Squire. I have been longing for a glimpse of him from the first moment I heard his name."

"That can be accomplished very easily," replied my friend; "for he being a personal acquaintance of my own, of course I have it in my power to make him known to you also."

"I shall be anxious—quite anxious—till you do."

Two or three days had passed away, and Vincent had found no means of introducing me to the Squire's notice without calling with me himself, and his time had been so greatly occupied as to hinder him from leaving his own cure; when, one morning, my friend entered my room smiling.

"I have a leisure day now, my friend; if you are willing to use it with me, let us devote it to paying a visit to *the* Squire. I am in his debt a call, and I shall be glad to drive you over to his house."

"I shall be very glad," I answered; "but how comes it to pass that, if you know him, you have not paid sufficient attention to enable you, yourself, to judge from his manners and his tone, his style and his language, whether the censures of the poor are indeed just?"

"To tell you the truth, I have never paid any attention to him. I have occasionally seen him,—perhaps for half an hour,—and talked common-places with him; that's all."

I was driven over with due style and ceremony, to make the Squire's acquaintance. I perceived a little feeling of dislike or dissatisfaction creep over me, as I noticed the gate closed at the end of the drive to his house, without the bell by which the poor could make their arrival known when they came begging for aid. I was filled with anxiety as we drove to the door, for the two giant footmen had fulfilled their appointed task, and hastened to throw the gates widely open, even before the sound of the vehicle could have been *fully* heard to them. The Squire was at home, and received us very cordially and joyously. He was a good companion, evidently,—a *bon-vivant*; and, as far as common conversation went, he was an agreeable companion enough,—not over-refined perhaps,—but he is fastidious over-much who quarrels with another man merely for his lack of polish and refinement.

In the course of the visit, Vincent happened to mention (as indeed it was no wonder that he should, for a more tender husband does not exist,) the extreme pain he was experiencing in consequence of his wife having become very delicate for some months past, and how much gladness he should feel if she could receive, for however brief a period, the advantages arising from change of air and scene. The Squire immediately expressed a hope that Mr. and Mrs. Vincent, as well as I, who was their solitary guest, would come for a sojourn at his mansion: he assured us

that no healthier spot was to be found in all England, or, he might say, in the whole universe, and he prognosticated that a change, almost miraculous, would, after a few days, take place in Mrs. Vincent. Vincent replied that he felt greatly the politeness and kindness of the Squire, but that the parish was so extensive, and the duties of it so incessant, as effectually to prevent his accepting the offer. The Squire then said that there was no reason why Mrs. Vincent and I should not become his guests, although Vincent was detained by his pastoral labours; that he would give a willing welcome to any, since he could not have all; and that he was convinced we should find things very comfortable, and to our hearts' content. I was very desirous to accede to the proposition, so far as I was concerned, as my doing so would give me an opportunity of seeing the character of the Squire; and his manner was so easy and friendly, and his invitation was so warmly reiterated, that the embarrassment I might have felt at availing myself, under ordinary circumstances, of the offer of so entire a stranger, was necessarily removed in this case. At length it came to be settled that on a certain day, about three or four days subsequent to the period of our visit, I should become, for a brief season, an inmate of the Squire's mansion,—a partaker of his free and generous hospitality. No one could doubt the welcome he would give me; for he was just such a jovial character as likes to have his house as full as possible.

As we returned home after calling upon the Squire, Vincent appealed to me whether I did not think that the worthy man was undeserving of the harsh things which had been said against him. I replied that I should be better able to answer his inquiry when I had passed a few days under his hospitable roof. Vincent well-nigh lost his patience at this, and demanded whether I had not found his neighbour very obliging and courteous in his manner; nay, whether I had not thought him more than courteous, in his very kind readiness to do what he could for the benefit of Mrs. Vincent's health. I acknowledged the entire truth of this; but pointed out that it was not the behaviour of the Squire towards the gentry which had ever formed a subject of censure, but his bearing towards the poor, of which latter I as yet had had no personal opportunity of judging. Vincent thought me very unconvinced, and gave over any further attempts to make me a convert. And I, also, was very ready to drop the subject for the present, since any arguments would have been very idle, while, in truth, neither of us had any real facts to argue upon;—Vincent forming his notion from a one-sided view of the matter, and I having acquired mine from the report of (probably) very prejudiced informants. Moreover, I felt that, though the Squire's very handsome conduct towards myself was no evidence of his amiability towards all, I was bound to repress the expression of any suspicions to the contrary, regarding a man whose civilities I had just received, and whose tender of future civilities I had just accepted. But how could I be so extravagant as to imagine that Vincent, at such a moment,

T

could be otherwise than thoroughly satisfied that the gentleman upon whom we had that morning called possessed every virtue under the sun? He *must be* gentle and generous, for he had felt for Mrs. Vincent's indisposition, and had desired to assist in its removal.—He *must be* admirable in his fulfilment of every domestic and social duty, for he cared for Mrs. Vincent's welfare. Who, that has not lived long enough and badly enough in this bustling world to have ceased to retain even the quarter of a heart, will not enter into, and sympathize with Vincent's feelings? Who does not know, or rather *feel*, that a kindness, however simply shown, to one very dear to us, and especially if that dear one is a sufferer, commends the giver of it to our good opinion, as well as to our affections, with instantaneous success? It is delightful to the mind to listen to the eloquence of one who is

“ Grave without dulness, learned without pride;
Exact, yet not precise; though meek, keen-eyed;
Who, when occasion justifies its use,
Has wit, as bright as ready, to produce;
Can fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it is a privilege to hear :”—

but when you have come down from the sick-chamber of one in whose existence your own seemed bound up,—for the issue of whose illness you trembled lest you should be watching with too absorbing an interest,—and any person has asked you after the invalid, and to your reply, that some amendment has taken place, has answered “ I am very glad of it,” with a look and tone which evidenced the truth of the assertion,—Reader !...did you ever hear any eloquence like that?

My intended visit to the Squire took place, and from a residence with him I was enabled to come to an entire conclusion as to his character. Even at this moment I perfectly remember every day that passed whilst I was in his company. Every action of his, and almost every tone of his voice, are fresh in my memory. He is now “ green in memory's waste,” as one whom I might pre-eminently name

THE FACETIOUS MAN.

I have many times thought that I would write a brief account of “ the good things ” I heard said—to the poor—by Mr. Theodore Lambton. I am quite sure that, in the present laughter-loving age, it would sell well. In an age when caricatures pass for wit, whose only merit is in their dissimilarity to all human nature,—and when jests pass for humour because they are so broad as to force their points upon the dullest comprehension,—there can be no doubt the record of the Squire's witticisms would find ready purchasers.

Mr. Lambton's jests were appreciated in the highest degree by those

who usually assembled round his festive board, or joined him in his daily rides and walks. He suffered no lack of companions, for there are, both in town and country, a race of men to be met with who are ready to accept of hospitality they are not expected to return, and to requite the obligation by applauding the talents of the greater man. In very truth, Mr. Lambton was "such a funny gentleman" that everybody laughed when his good things were heard; although justice—stern, inexorable justice—compels me to declare that it was not always easy to hear them; for his mouth was often full when he uttered them: what he was eating seemed to give him a relish to his wit, as no doubt, indeed, it would *when his joke was on a starving man!*

I think I see him now, and can picture to myself the delight of all near him at his splendid wit. The Squire used to wear seals of a stupendous magnitude suspended to his watch-chain,—seals which bore the crest and arms of the illustrious house of Lambton,—the head of Minerva, (his presiding goddess,) and some hounds in full pursuit of the timid fleet and panting hare. It seemed as if the Squire had determined to have seals capacious enough to accommodate upon them the entire ancestry of his family, the varied deeds of the sapient daughter of Jupiter, and a whole pack of dogs in their fleet career. When the Squire joked upon poverty, how the seals used to rejoice! The inanimate seals—how they jumped about when he laughed! as if they were proud and happy to know that they were gold! Far, very far, were they removed from the dishonour of possessing but little of that precious and heavy metal.

The Squire had, as most especial and valued favourites, various spa-



niels, terriers, and pugs, which were ever at his feet or on his knees: they looked up to him as their patron, and he esteemed them as some of his choicest treasures. I do not think that the Squire could long have survived without them, as they had been in his possession for many years, and he knew their whole history, and the names of their fathers and mothers for many generations. As for the dogs, they knew their master well;—they sorrowed in his sorrows,—they joyed in his joys; and from long friendship they had had something of the Squire's spirit and character infused into them. When the Squire made his jokes and laughed, the little dogs would get animated in an instant, and would run about and bite at the feet of the poor people to whom the Squire was addressing himself, or to whom he was at any rate alluding.

Yet I would desire not to be misunderstood. Let not my readers think that the Squire was always merry and always laughing;—that he was so very often can admit of no question; yet the Squire had his moments of profound sadness: to have seen him at such periods, a stranger might have supposed that he was a man of a serious and melancholy temperament. If my readers had seen Mr. Lambton at church,—and there every Sunday he was to be seen, (for Mr. Lambton would have considered it very unbecoming that the high-backed pew, with the hatchments of his ancestors ranged over it, should have been empty of the representative of that ancient family,)—if, I say, they had seen him at church, when a sermon—A CHARITY SERMON—was being preached, after which there must be a collection, they would have thought that he never would smile again.—

“ ’Twas sadness deep,

“ For which, on this earth, grew no healing balm.”

Before I proceed, I ought, perhaps, to give the name of the Squire's seat, so as to identify it, and give myself a better and easier way of alluding to it than by a particular description every time I have occasion to advert to this residence. The name of the seat was *Eglantine Hall*,—so called by Mr. Theodore Lambton; for, strange to say, up to his time it had never owned a name; it had been known as the seat of the Lambton family, and that was all. Why, however, Mr. Lambton gave it the name he did give it, I will not presume to say; for to a certainty no *Eglantine* was there, yet did the Squire so denominate it in seriousness and not in humour. Possibly he considered within himself that a house might as well be called a flower, although no flower was there, as a man be called a man, who had no open, benevolent, generous, and manly feelings about him.

Eglantine Hall was, as my readers may possibly recollect, situated at several miles' distance from any of the country towns; and the nearest of these said towns was seven or eight miles removed from one of a larger size, whither the important offices held by the worthy Squire frequently

called him. It was one of the sayings which he used frequently to repeat, that "business must be attended to;" and yet he had found it hard indeed to act up to this motto; for, although he could consent to drive his four-in-hand into the adjoining town, he by no means relished continuing his journey in such a manner to that which was some miles more distant. The Squire was a man of tender mercy to his horses and his dogs, and used them as gently as if they had been relatives of his own.

To obviate, then, this difficulty, the Squire had suggested that once a week,—upon the busiest day,—a carriage (a kind of omnibus) should ply between the two places, and carry the gentlemen who might desire such a convenience.

When a man of such influence proposed anything, there was little question it would be carried into effect. The omnibus was started, and once a week the Squire availed himself of its capabilities. I sometimes had the honour of accompanying him into the town whither his duties led him. Oh! if my readers had seen him in the omnibus, comfortably seated on a cold and rainy day, cracking his jokes upon the shivering beggars who stood in the chill and the wet, I am convinced that they would have admired his condescension. He would tell the poor that they were not sugar nor salt, to melt in the rain; and that he was *sure* they were not the former, for they did not look *very sweet* about it, and that they must not mind getting their faces washed for once in a way. According to his ideas, wet days were licensed to carry *thirteen gentlemen inside*, and an innumerable company of *poor people outside*.

Lambton was at all times a man well satisfied with himself, with his station in society, and with his worldly wealth. Yet I know not that I ever saw him looking prouder than when he was safely seated in the omnibus. Let not the reader smile at the idea of a man feeling elated because he was in such a vehicle, for it offered him a substantial reason for his pride. Here is a vehicle provided solely for his convenience, and that of others like himself,—here are horses and men ready to do his bidding, and to carry him as far as he desires to go, and not a step beyond it: whilst others are compelled to travel through the wet and cold, on foot and unprotected, he may sit at his ease and smile, luxuriously resting on his well-stuffed cushion. He must be far above the common herd of men whose lowest walk of life is—into an omnibus. I call it the lowest, for so, of course, he calls it who has a carriage, horses, and servants of his own.

My readers may by chance remember (for I must here again tax my friends' memories) that I stated before that the Squire kept a vast deal of company, and that he was ever happy to have his house crowded by guests such as he thought deserving of being seated at his hospitable board. He delighted in dinner-parties and dances, and towards those who had mingled with him in these amusements he was always polite and cordial in his

manners. The generality of the people who went as passengers in the omnibus before mentioned were neighbours and friends of the Squire, and consequently he found much social intercourse and pleasure within it. Occasionally, however, a stranger would require to travel in this conveyance; one whom some particular occasion had called into so remote a part of the country. Of such a man, of course, the Squire knew nothing whatever, neither did he expect to see him or hear of him again—no common bond of acquaintance bound them in any measure together.

What a difference was to be discerned in Mr. Lambton, according as his companions in the omnibus might be! If ever he was supereminently affable and courteous, it was when he met those whom he had previously entertained at his table or had mixed with at the feasts of other country gentlemen. What shaking of hands!—what smiling countenances!—what greetings of joy! The dearest wish of his heart seemed to be realized, and he appeared to welcome them as those whose very presence rendered him a happier man.

Yes! if my readers had seen Lambton in the omnibus, with eleven of his friends and acquaintances (all of the eleven of considerable magnitude, for country gentlemen are accustomed to get fat), and squeezing himself into as small a space as possible to make room for another—for Mr. Lionel Johnson, the regular thirteenth—they would have known that Mr. Lambton was of the gentlest and kindest mould—literally self-sacrificing!

But if ever he was stern and dignified in his manner, it was when he met in the omnibus those perfectly unknown to him—strangers from the metropolis, or, possibly, from some remote district, which was still more rural than that which he inhabited. What gathering of frowns! what glooming of brows! what turnings away in scorn! The enemies of his peace seemed to be ranged before him, and the war-trumpet appeared to have sounded in his mind to summon him to a contest with them. If my readers had seen Lambton *then*—even when there were but some six or seven of the regular travellers assembled there, and consequently when there was room sufficient—ay, and to spare—and had marked how, as a stranger sought to come in, Lambton endeavoured by every art to prevent his getting seated, and to induce the new-comer, from the discomfort of his position, to resign his place among them, they would have known that he could be a man of an unbending and determined spirit.

But to know Lambton well and properly it was necessary to know him at all times. His wit was ever ready to flow—his humour could not be retained within any confined and narrow boundaries. How well do I remember Lambton upon one particular occasion! A great feast-day had just passed;—we all know the manner in which these regular celebrations of public annual festivals are kept in the country—how much more they are attended to there than they can be in London, the mighty and busy metropolis. The good things of this life had smoked upon the festive

board upon the occasion to which I now allude, and all things at Eglantine Hall had worn an appearance of life and gaiety, far beyond even their wonted aspect. It was the day after that distinguished one to which I have alluded. Rejoicing to a vast extent had reigned everywhere amongst the gentry of those parts, and, of course, nowhere had it reigned with such sovereign power as at the Hall, whence jollity—overflowing jollity—had spread far and wide. Some duties had called Mr. Lambton into the larger town of which I have before spoken, and he had invited me to accompany him thither. I had done so, and had accompanied him to the various places where he was required in his official character. Mr. Lambton, ere he left the town, had gone round, as he was in the habit of doing, to the shops where meat, grocery, fruit, poultry, &c. &c., were sold, and had selected such articles of each kind as he considered would afford very good and comfortable fare for many subsequent days. The excellence of his living on the day just before had sharpened his appetite for luxuries, and he had laid in even more than his usual allowance of the comforts of an epicure. He therefore set out for his home with a blue bag (such as lawyers carry their briefs or their boots in, according as business is brisk or slack) full of what he had so accumulated. He was indeed a prudent man, who, like the ant, desired ever to have something in store. Upon the arrival of the omnibus at that smaller town which was nearest to Eglantine Hall, it always drew up at the “Prince’s Feathers,” a kind of inn, where Lambton and all his usual fellow-travellers were perfectly known to the obsequious landlord. He always was on the look-out for the omnibus, and directed the waitress to hasten immediately the carriage drew up at the door of the Feathers, to see to the guests alighting easily and pleasantly. On the day to which my story now points, the rain was descending in torrents and making a stream flow down the narrow and rugged streets. Lambton was just getting out of the omnibus—for he, being the greatest of the thirteen (in importance—not in size), was allowed *first* to extricate himself; he was telling all the other fat men that he wished them a good day (which, by the by, so far as plenty makes goodness, there seemed little doubt of their having); and the young and delicate girl who officiated as waitress, was running down the walk of a kind of garden which stood in front of the inn, with the fierce storm descending upon her unprotected head, and with the large umbrella hid under her apron to prevent its getting wet before Lambton used it; when, at this moment, a poor woman came up to the steps of the omnibus, and began to curtsy down to the ground before the lordly possessor of Eglantine Hall. She had an infant of some three months old upon her back, and she described in touching terms—touching, I mean, to some men—her state of faintness, weariness, and painfulness. She was as thin as a shadow, and the sad cough which so often afflicts the houseless wanderer, and which almost forms itself into the word CONSUMPTION, was harassing and wearing her. Unhappy

being!—made still more unhappy by the sight of her child—a sight usually so cheering to a mother's eye.

She faltered out, in weak and tremulous accents, that she had had nothing whatever—not even a crust of bread—to eat for—for —two days I think it was that she said. Yes! I am sure, upon second thoughts, that it was two days: the day before that on which she spoke, having been the great feast, makes me recollect it;—that was something for the Squire and the Squire's friends to date from. She told also—and she sighed more deeply now than she had sighed when she spoke of her necessities simply as they affected herself—she told of the faintness of her infant for want. Naturally, if the mother starve, the child, which draws its natural and blessed nourishment from that parent, must also perish;—if from the tree the vivifying sap be withheld, how must the branches which have sprung from it fade away in their earliest stage of life! The child may die, and the mother still survive; but if the mother so perish, she bears with her her weak and dependent offspring.

Now, some men—many men—would have been very cross and angry at the interruption of this poor woman. To be so troubled just as they were on the point of getting out of the omnibus—a task of some engineering skill and cleverness,—to be so annoyed, and thus rendered liable, perhaps, in their wish to avoid the importunities of a suppliant, to get wet by neglecting the umbrella brought so carefully for their protection, was amply sufficient to make very many in a state of boiling wrath and indignation: they would have sworn at her from their catalogue of oaths, as if *their* god—the god of whom they were followers and disciples—must avenge himself upon the poor and wretched: for such oaths are heard by us very often, and for precisely similar faults and offences. Or, if they did not indulge themselves in such imprecations, they would have told her that they saw a beadle coming down the street, to whom they would give her in charge. They would have drawn before her mind's eye the picture so terrifying of a man high in office, and higher in his own opinion, hurrying down the way to bear to a prison-house the being who had dared to annoy the ears of a gentleman, and shock his eye by the sight of a woman in poverty and in rags. They would have told her that they saw a beadle, albeit they saw him not,—and who could blame them? In such a case an untruth becomes innocent, and even laudable: the idea of punishment so speedily overtaking *the poor* is a very fine idea, and eminently satisfactory to those who have homes, food, and clothing. Such men describe a policeman, or a beadle, (as the case may be,) always at hand to seize on the suppliant wretch the moment she has asked a favour.

But none of these courses did Mr. Lambton pursue: he was too humorous a man to attempt to terrify any one,—he was too comic to think of such things as oaths and curses. Mr. Lambton turned him round in a leisurely and composed manner, and he drew his hand, encompassed in a

warm and thick yellow driving-glove, over his amiable face. So slowly and so carefully did that hand move, that a stranger might have thought that he was *sculpturing a face* of such comicality. It is really astonishing the quiet composure of these sly and quiet wits. A mine of wit lies hidden beneath a mountain of gravity; and until the time when the mine is sprung, no one would conceive the treasures that lie below it. It is the *groaning* mountain which brings forth only a mouse,—from the *quiet* one proceeds a much more important character.

I have told my readers that Lambton drew his hand very leisurely over his own face; he then dropped his hand, and raised it a second time: the eyes of the twelve in the omnibus were riveted upon him, for they were sure that he was not a man to do anything without a reason, and that his usual causes of action were those of wit and humour. The singularity, too, of raising his hand and smoothing his face,—then of lowering it, and subsequently of re-raising it,—drew the notice of all upon him. He put his hand to his hat, and the passengers all thought he was about to take it off to those amongst them (ten of the number) who were not to be his companions home; but, instead of that, he took it off, respectfully and deferentially, to the poor woman. Only think of the humour of that—of being polite to a destitute creature! But that was not all;—his wit did not rest contented. He pointed out the omnibus to the woman, and said to her,—

“ Well, my good lady; so you say you’re tired—very tired—I believe?”

“ I am tired to death, Sir,” she feebly answered.

“ You have walked a long way, I dare say; and have had the child to carry all the way too, I suppose?”

“ I have walked fifteen miles to-day, Sir; and my feet are quite sore, and my legs will scarce hold me up: and though the baby is thin enough (poor thing!), it is heavy when you come to carry it so much as fifteen miles.”

“ Well, well, my good woman!” said the Squire,—and he pointed to the omnibus as he spoke,—“ if you *are* so tired, why don’t you take a ride in the omnibus? They like to take ladies, so you had better hire it for a jaunt.”

Such were the Squire’s words.

This was one of the Squire’s palpable, and yet unexpected hits. Every one saw the joke, and yet no one looked for it,—least of all did she to whom the witticism was addressed. But never shall I forget how the joke was appreciated—no! I mean, was relished—by some; and their faces I shall always remember,—or, rather, I should say, the expression which their faces bore: it is imprinted *with repeated force* upon my mind, for the expression in all such faces was precisely the same.

The conductor, who stood upon the step, which acted as the stage for all his greatest performances, laughed himself into a state of perfect joy,—

jumped up and down as if commencing a cad-hornpipe,—and remarked, very appropriately,—

“What a funny gentleman!”

My readers, by the by, have doubtless noticed, if they have ever travelled in an omnibus, (and if not, let them learn by the experience and dearly-acquired wisdom of one who has,) that conductors are a humorous and talented race of men, and that they are always willing, not only to be lively themselves, but to be merry at the liveliness of others. Their existence passes away in a continual round of delight; and the puns and jests of themselves and others form but the choicest flowers in a garden that blooms around them ever verdantly.

The driver, who is bound to go by the conductor's orders, as the initiated are aware, (and here again to the uninitiated I am imparting useful knowledge, which may prove very valuable to them,) upon hearing the remark of his friend, laughed, and said it was “all right,”—as no doubt it was to *him*.

And now I shall, induced by the last sentence, make here a short digression upon omnibus-drivers. I know of no other class of mankind that seems so dependent for its pleasures upon others as does this one. Let us suppose an omnibus without a conductor,—how sad would be its driver! He would have no one to share his jests with—no one with whom to count the number of passengers that were seated within the opposition conveyance,—no one to count the profits of each journey. But with a conductor how altered is his state! Every passenger forms a subject for conversation, and every other such carriage offers a medium of joint calculation.

The identical driver to whom my narrative now points did not, however, confine his feelings simply and solely to the laconic remark of “All right!”—he jerked with all his power at the horses' heads, as if he thought that they were likely to drop down from laughing. And I do not wonder at such a proceeding on his part, for he well knew their predilection for such a mode of showing their feelings. He was certain that they often did fall; and he was as sure that, more often than they actually fell, they showed a tendency to do so: and as he could not penetrate into the depths of a horse's heart, nor spy out the causes which, acting there, led to the effects which followed, how could he know but what it was from their inward merriment and glee that they so stumbled, and that from secret laughter they lost the ability to stand upright like safe and steady animals?

Well, then! the Squire left these congenial spirits plunged deeply in merriment, and the poor woman plunged as deeply in—Pshaw! I was talking of the facetious Squire, and his happiness—not of the poor widow, and her grief.

We pursued our way to Eglantine Hall, and there did the lively lord of that famous mansion retail, again and again, to his numerous and obsequious guests, the witticism of which he had been the author, and which had

previously met with such marked approbation from his associates. Truly, Lambton was a droll fellow! I am not able to inform my readers whether the widow spoke of him in such terms, for as she was not listened to, either by the Squire, or by those who were his friends and admirers, I have had no means of ascertaining. I leave to my reader's penetration to solve this difficulty.

I have made a great oversight in giving my account of the Squire;—I believe I have not once mentioned that he had a family of children. This is a point which the next circumstance I have to relate forcibly brings to my memory. I am sure I never ought to have forgotten it, for he was so good, so tender a parent, that he was the subject of the conversation of his neighbours upon that account. He doted, actually doted, upon his little ones: he hoped to live to see them ornaments to their country—worthy successors to their worthy sire. He would sit for hours caressing and fondling them, and looking forward to the time when he should see them filling posts of honour and offices of importance in Church and State.

He used to say that he made idols of his family,—and perhaps he did so: it is certain that more dull creatures it were impossible to gather together for the blindest devotion. There were six of them, and all of them very juvenile; for the Squire had not wedded till in middle life, and his posterity had arisen quickly upon one another.

The ladies who came to the Hall noticed all these pigmies very much,—for, of course, when the father of a family is possessed of some thousands a-year, and of not a little patronage, his children, were they ugly as Sin, would be admired as if they were lovely as gentlest Virtue. There were some, however, who declared that the Squire spoiled his children; but even in such a declaration there is a kind of compliment intended to the fatherly affection of the spoiler. He would always answer (as who does not answer under similar circumstances?) that they were too good to be so injured. Yet that he did thus do them wrong I have no hesitation in affirming: even the pastrycook would say that he spoiled them when they had been surfeiting in her shop on cakes made with bad butter, and upon acid barley-sugar; but she did not think that she spoiled them also, though perhaps that would have been no less true and correct than the other.

Upon the occasion to which my thoughts are now directed, he had bidden his little sons prepare themselves, and had told them that he would take them a rural walk to enjoy the beauties of the country. Here was no instance of spoiling, but rather of benefiting his offspring; he found a means of their inhaling the delightful breezes of the mountains, and deriving health and happiness from such a pilgrimage. And so they started. How beautiful a picture was thus offered to the contemplative and generous mind, of a parent laying aside the various duties which his

high offices entailed upon him, and voluntarily going into the fields, and upon the heights, for the sake of instructing and pleasing his children!

They sallied forth to look upon the charms of ever-charming Nature, who seems to spread her beauties forth to arrest the eye, in order that she may win to truth and rectitude those whom her loveliness attracts;—how different from Art, who displays her allurements often only to ruin and destroy! As they proceeded on their excursion, the Squire let no opportunity pass unused of pointing out the beauties of the country: unlike to some sluggish minds, which can find nothing on which to dilate in the fairest spots of creation, he found

“books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

I was happy enough to be permitted to join him and his sons in their ramble, and well do I recall to mind all his varied observations. How the good father pointed out to his boys that, if they broke down the bushes which came in their way, they would soon catch a view of Jenkins's factory at some particular spot or other: they knew the place well enough, for the factory children had often been brought up to the Hall for some fault; such as apparent laziness, occasioned, *as they said*, by over-weariness from incessant work, and had been justly dealt with by the lord of the Hall. How, a few minutes after this, he desired his sons to look hard towards the north or south, (as the case might be,) and they would there behold another of the country mansions like his own—a hall bearing another name than Eglantine, yet one with it in the style of grandeur which marked it in its feasts and fêtes: he would call their notice to the spot where some gentleman resided, who, many months ago, as he said, had him to his house, and many others of the great gentlemen of that neighbourhood, and had made them all “so jolly,” that when he went out to return home afterwards he could not see anything whatever.

“It was a good thing, Bob,” said he, addressing a very small boy of five or six years old,—“it was a good thing, Bob, that I did not undertake then to show you the beauties of the country, for I shouldn't have known where to point them out; or, if I had found them, I should have found twice the right number.”

With such instructions and pleasing accounts did the worthy father amuse his children; and so did he continue his walk, the boys running by his side, and anxiously listening to every accent which fell from his venerated lips. At last they came upon a man,—an old man, worn by time, and still more worn by sorrow: he was dressed (if I may so denominate one clothed in such things as hung about him) in rags and tatters. He was sitting upon a stile, and his two crutches (which necessity had long forced him to use whenever he was well enough to sally forth to get a little of the fine country air) were placed beside him. I concluded, by a glance which I cast upon the crutches, that he had very long been com-

pelled to use these supports, for the marks of an extensive service were discernible upon them; the ends of them (where they came near to the ground) were very much worn away, and the handles showed that they had faithfully fulfilled their task of upholding their master.

As the Squire and his boys drew near to the patriarch, he raised his hat, not with the usual salutation, only, which it is so pleasant to see given in the country by the poor to the rich, but for the purpose of asking from them an alms. Do not, oh! gentle readers, do not do the Squire the injustice to imagine that he hurried past with his children, and paid no regard to the aged sufferer. To think so would be wronging the proprietor of Eglantine Hall. He called out immediately to his sons to stop and hear what the old man "had got to say for himself." Of course they did so; and stood in front of the beggar, to listen to his solicitations. What, then, did he tell them? Little, indeed, did he *tell*. His grey hairs and his toothless mouth, his tottering limbs and his failing eyes, could have told, it them far more certainly and correctly. He told them that he was "very—very—" and then he forgot the word that he meant to say;—that word was *old*.

Little more did the ancient pauper say, for he added only, "Bless those fine young gentlemen, who can run and jump so lively! but that he could hardly get about."

"*You* not get about!" said Lambton; "why, how is that?"

The other shook his head, and answered not a word.

"*You* not get about!" cried Lambton, returning again to his speech; "you, with your four legs," (and he pointed to the crutches as he spoke this,) "ought to be able to do better than we with our two."

I hope my readers will see the humour and wit of the Squire's remark; for if they do not discern them in this instance, I fear they will not do so in any other I may hereafter mention to them,—for the joke here was especially in the Squire's own style, and as good a one as I ever remember to have heard fall from his lips: the tone of his jests was ever the same,—the style of them ever similar,—and the character of them ever marked and distinct.

However my readers may esteem "this flash of merriment," it certainly "set the young gentlemen in a roar." They knew always when their father meant a joke, from the peculiar twinkle in his eye, and the smile at the corner of his lip; but this one really delighted them: it struck them as very good—coupled, perhaps, with the sight of how very frail the natural supporters were which the old man had to trust his life upon. They literally *danced and jumped* at the fun.

"Happy childhood! what can be
In happiness compared to thee?"

says the well-known poem; and had I taken these boys at that particular

U

period as specimens of children, I should have been puzzled to find aught so joyous to which I could liken them,—excepting, indeed, it might be their father, who stood by with the extreme satisfaction of a man who has said a good thing, and has found out that that good thing has been taken, and that its merit and point have been appreciated.

The old suppliant, surprised at gaining such an answer, let the hat, which he had been holding with all reverence before the Squire and the boys, fall from his hand. It fell upon the ground:—peradventure he allowed it purposely to escape his grasp; for he had so long and so vainly held it out to the world, praying some succour, and getting none, that his hand was over-tired, and his grey head was allowed to remain uncovered. A melancholy spectacle he at that moment presented to my individual apprehension, I am free to confess.

At a time when we are called upon to soothe, cheer, and comfort the tottering steps of fast-declining age, and to render more soft the pillow for the head of the old man when he seeks his couch at night—at that time was this poor one forced by stern necessity to sit or to stand in the air, which seemed to him cold and chill, (for so it seemeth to him of fourscore years and upwards,) and to become the jest and the laughing-stock of another man, and of children over whose heads but few summers had passed.

The pleasure which filled the swelling heart of the father, at perceiving that his sons were so alive to his witticism, was of course gratifying to behold. He promised them, at once, and without any deliberation, a whole holiday, free from the restraint, so irksome to youth, of governesses and teachers, and from the cares of books and slates. He gave them this privilege, as he said, “to enjoy themselves,—that is, you know, my boys, *to run about*, and be happy.”

The father and his children proceeded on their walk, and left the beggar sitting upon the stile, and musing over——Pshaw! how can I say what he was thinking of? I have no business to attempt to dive into the feelings of others,—and so, for aught I know, he gave no attention to the parting remark of the Squire, or to the shout of the boys. It is enough for me to speak to simple facts, and leave others to draw inferences and deductions.

I call to memory one other peculiar circumstance, which I shall now take the opportunity to mention. Upon this occasion Lambton was not accompanied as he was upon that last described. No sportive children were now companions for him—to share his merriment, and to give the ready laugh at each jest his lips might think fit to utter. You might now have supposed him a grave and solemn personage,—you would never have conjectured him to be so facetious; for men of such a life and character are not usually so lively when left alone with their own minds. It is anything but a joke for guilty man *to be left alone with his never-dying soul*. In the crowd a person may often be thoughtless, blasphemous, unkind to

inferiors, malicious, ungrateful; but in stillness and solitude, in quiet and calmness, it is almost impossible for any man to brave Heaven, with its constant watchfulness and unerring judgment! And if it is impossible, in any place and under any circumstances, to be thoughtless when alone, in how striking a manner is this impossibility displayed when the solitary person is in such a place as that where Lambton was when I intruded upon his solitude! It was in the churchyard we met. The churchyard! Oh, what associations are connected, in the mind of every man, (however hard and callous he may be,) with that single word! How has the heart of every one who has arrived at mature life died within him in such a place! Can he return to that spot, or to a similar one, without intense emotion and sober thought? To those who have no hope of an unfading world, and of a reunion with those whom they have loved as their own soul, and with whom Death has woven the bands of love a thousand times stronger than in life they could by possibility be joined—the entrance to a churchyard might well cause the spirit utterly to fail, and the care-crushed heart to sink.

Lambton, when I entered the old churchyard-gate, was bending his steps to the most retired part of that quiet resting-place. He was passing in and out amongst the graves, and treading upon those that came in his way, in a manner which I always shudder to see. It may be superstition and folly in me to feel so, yet I tremble, and my heart fails in my bosom, when I behold the heedlessness with which people walk over the sepulchres of their departed fellow-creatures. Green be the sod, and unpressed be the turf, which covers the grave of the poorest and humblest of mankind! A piece of the noblest workmanship of God is placed beneath, and the spirit which animated that beautiful and wonderful piece of mechanism is now in a state of being infinitely superior to our own. Let no careless foot press down the mound over which the tears of a widow, or a sorrowing parent, have been shed: let no scornful eye look down upon the grass-grown tomb, which is ever fresh in the thought and memory of weeping fond ones!

The wind was high and piercing, (as it often is in the part of the country in which I was then sojourning,) and was whistling around the graves with a shrill shriek (like that never-dying one which is always heard in the ears of the murderer): it blew back the capacious coat of Mr. Theodore Lambton, heavy though it was from the well-filled pockets, which were crowded with refreshments he had brought out with him to eat whilst upon his ramble.

The Squire was one of those people who take good care that their bodily health shall not suffer for lack of adequate nourishment, and who, having laid down fixed rules for themselves, that, come what may, so many times in every day, and at so many stated intervals, (not far distant from each other,) shall their strength be renewed by a fresh supply of suste-

nance, never go out for a stroll of an hour or two without making a larder of their pockets, wherein eatables are providently stowed away.

The wind, which blew back the Squire's ample blue coat, displayed a mighty mass of white waistcoat, which seemed spread out like a vast lake. It appeared to be placed as if in contradistinction to the blackness of grief around him. His seals, to which I have before alluded as of such ponderous magnitude, swung backwards and forwards, and seemed, on so epicurish a person, like the pendulum of a clock, *marking the hour of dinner*. The Squire, at the moment when my eyes first lighted upon him in the churchyard, certainly offered a very unsuitable subject to the scene about him. He was a man of the world—essentially a man of the world; thinking of its hopes and its fears, of its short-lived pleasures and its fading amusements; while those who were now around him had passed away from this world,—their spirits had escaped from the turmoils of time and the vanities of an earthly existence. If they still had their hopes and their fears, they centred in a matter of eternal interest, and of a changeless character.

As the Squire caught a view of me, his late thoughtfulness seemed instantly to vanish. He became the picture of contentment and happiness;—he could smile while he walked amidst the green graves, and could talk of those below unawed and carelessly. He came up to me, and “welcomed me to the churchyard,” in such a tone as showed that he did not reckon it to be any cause for congratulation to be placed there; and he now laughed as he read the inscription which marks many a gravestone in rural places of sepulture,—

“Affliction sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain,”—

as he exclaimed how the respectable gentlemen thus mentioned might have had a share in sending their patients to their last home, instead of in keeping them from it: he thought also of Mr. Smythe, at the red and blue lamp, and of the pale boy with the oil-skin covered basket; and he remembered how he had heard Mr. Smythe pronounced by the ladies to be “cleverer than any physician,” and conjectured how his cleverness might have showed itself upon the occasions I have just mentioned. He talked of all these things,—and he laughed!

Just at the time when the glee of the Squire showed itself in his joy-excited countenance, a little child—a girl—approached him. She put forth her little hands in an attitude of eutreaty, and begged for help. I have done Mr. Lambton the justice to say that he never turned away from any one who asked him for his succour;—he never (like some whom I know) walked away angrily and silently the instant sorrow and distress came near him. He always heard what the sufferers had to say, and gave an attention—an apparent attention—to their several narratives.

How utterly such conduct as theirs to whom I have alluded is at variance

with every feeling of humanity and compassion, it needs little evidence to show. When Heaven suspends, as we read that it has done, its showers, for years together, at the request of man, and again dispenses the verdure-producing rain at the wishes of an earthly suppliant, how can man reconcile to himself the heartlessness and the indifference with which he will neglect and shun the entreaties of one formed like himself, and made by the same Master-Mind, who, for the advantage he willed to *both*, made one dependent upon the care of another?

Hard and unfeeling must he have been who could turn away and take no notice of the slim and delicate child who then stood before the Squire in humble supplication. To neglect the wants and the entreaties of the strongest and heartiest of mortals is bad enough, for he is, by his very nature, liable to miseries, and too frail to be able to meet and conquer them. But this poor child seemed scarcely strong enough to deserve the name of a mortal, (linked as that name is to weakness and vanity,) for she was so spiritual in her aspect, that one might well have supposed the slightest breath of wind would have carried her from this world, and the slightest evidence of neglect and unkindness have bowed her to the earth on which she rested. If man, in his best and most prosperous state, be a flower—a fading flower—rising with the morning sun, and blighted before it is fully risen—what, alas! must this poor, bending, pale, and fragile lily be likened unto?

The child was of great beauty, for thinness and pallidness had not had power to destroy the charms with which nature had endowed her. In fact, hers was that sort of loveliness which poverty and neglect cannot deface, or, at any rate, cannot annihilate. Formed in an exquisite mould, she defied the attacks of these enemies to render her otherwise than attractive. Grief had indeed tried, with savage tyranny, to seize upon her victim, and take from her her childish graces; and, in savage revenge and despair at not being able to accomplish her purpose, she had made in that face, the beauty of which she could not kill, full many a gash, to mark that she had at least succeeded in wounding it: the furrows down which the tears of one so young and so innocent had passed in copious showers were the wounds which she had inflicted. Alas! that such should have been upon the countenance of one who was barely nine years of age, and was a perfect novice in everything but grief!

I was sensibly moved at the sight of the child. Here was everything to interest a man: youth—sex—distress—innocence:—one of these four is sufficiently touching,—how could any one be firm against them collectively?

She came in front of the Squire, and told her piteous tale: it was a sad one enough; but it was one of sorrow so usual to be met with, that I pass it over. Having narrated it, she extended her hand—her little thin white hand—for pecuniary help. Any one would have wished to kiss that hand, had

it been only for the innate and natural love of the Pure. She stood, with marks of grief which could not be gainsaid or denied,—with traces of distress and poverty too evident to be mistaken,—with tottering knees and pallid eyes:—she stood—to entreat for—a penny, of a man whose dogs and horses cost him hundreds of pounds every year to support and cherish them!

After this, what do my readers suppose that the Squire of Eglantine Hall did? They know already that Mr. Lambton was not the man to walk away from any one who besought his aid; but they are aware, also, that he was not in the habit of very promptly expending his money upon the poor and the needy. What did he do? He had some conversation with the girl.—He nodded his head and smiled when she finished her story; which was minute enough in all particulars of her life, history, and present state.

“Well! is that all you have to tell me, my child?” said the Squire,—“nothing more? That is too short; you don’t give me half enough of it.”

“Nothing more, Sir,” said the girl. “I have told you everything.”

She did not see that it was a jest of the Squire’s, and that what he said he meant purely as ironical; but, in her simplicity, believed that people meant kindly by her.

“Well! but I say,” asked the Squire, “why don’t your father or your brother work for you, and not let you be a trampler?—eh?”

“I told you, Sir,” said the little girl, bursting into tears,—“I told you, Sir, all about it.”

“All about what, my girl?” continued the Squire. “All about what? eh?”

“That I have no father, Sir!”

“That you *had* no father!” said Mr. Lambton, purposely misinterpreting her words, as wits are very much in the habit of doing, when they think they can bring in a humorous thing by it.

“My poor father died years ago,” said the girl; “but he left me a brother—a good brother, Sir; older than me a good bit.”

“Well! well! well! that’s all the same thing” (I confess I did not see the force of this argument, nor the justice of the conclusion drawn); “and if you have a brother, why don’t *he* support you?”

“I have no brother now, Sir.”

“No brother, too! why you say one minute you have a brother, and the next moment you have *not* a brother. I can’t understand how that can be; that’s too deep for me, you know.”

“For some time after my father’s death, I had a brother, Sir; and a very good and kind brother he was. He was my support, Sir; he took care of me, and was just like my father used to be. Poor Bob! He worked early and late for me, Sir,—and late and early;—he was always a working.”

"Ay! to be sure, and quite right he should, too; for most of your sort of people think that they are just to sit at home and eat and drink, and leave others to keep them, and pay for their pleasures. That's true enough, is it not?" added the Squire, and he turned towards me.

I busied myself in picking a small flower that was growing near one of the tombs, and therefore gave no reply to his inquiry.

"Ah! but it is so though, and it's no use talking about it; for that's their way: if they go out and work for two or three hours, then they think they have done a great deal, and that we ought to be obliged to them, and thank them for what they've done."

"But my poor brother worked *too* hard, Sir!"

"Oh! *too* hard did he? then he was a very unusual kind of a fellow, I can promise you: that's not the custom with fellows of his stamp."

"He worked for me, Sir, till he worked himself ill, and he kept getting worse and worse, and no one seemed to care about him, Sir; but he cared a great deal about me,—he loved me so much, Sir."

"Loved his *sister*, did he? he must have been a silly fellow," said the Squire, laughing, and turning away.

She did not hear the last words, or the spirit, even of one so young and so gentle, would, I think, have arisen, and she—a beggar-child—would have stood forth as the angry opponent of a rich and powerful man. As it was, she heard not: but her sorrow for her lost brother knew no bounds; she had drawn the memory of him more vividly back, and it filled her with the bitterness of grief.

"I shall never—never—never—see him again!" were her only words.

There are known to be words—mere isolated words—at the sound of which the heart beats high, and the whole soul is moved, and the spirit of man is bent like an aspen in the wind. Such words are those of Home! Country! Father! Child! Wife! Friend! How do such single words move the mind of the soldier, when he is on the bloody plain!—of the sailor, when he is battling with the storm and the tempest!—of the student, solitary in his closet, far removed from the social fireside, and those who have made that fireside full of dear recollections and sweet thoughts; And how does a sentence, which was once uttered in accents of affection by lips we loved to listen to, and found sweet music flowing from, if again uttered, though by a perfect stranger, rule and overpower the strongest man! The giant mind of a Newton or a Shakspeare,—of an Alexander or a Hannibal,—would confess itself over-mastered and conquered by such a simple sentence! Such a sentence we might have supposed to have been uttered by the little girl,—for at the few words, "*I shall never see him again*," a complete alteration came over the Squire;—his eyes brightened—the smile played around his lips—his body moved from side to side, from the joyous merriment which was reigning triumphant within him—and his hands, as if involuntarily, rubbed themselves

together. The Squire, however, whispered to me the secret feelings of his heart.

"It's all a story, my dear fellow; no doubt about it. It's all a story. What's the use of any humbug about it? No question her brother is as well as she is, and that it's all a trumped-up concern."

I did not venture to remark that, if any person were only as well as she, he would be in a very sickly and declining condition; and to add my own conviction that her tale was as true as ever the lip of sorrow uttered, and the bosom of childhood heaved over, as it narrated it to the stranger.

I knew the Squire was determined upon his jest, and that it would be vain and futile to endeavour to turn him from it. The worthy took a survey of the tombs nearest and most suitable for the purpose, and at last, finding one very little distance removed, which a person could sit upon comfortably, he seated himself upon it as if in his easy chair in the well-furnished hall.

Then, calling to the girl to come near to him, he looked at her hard in the face for a minute or two, whilst the laugh played round his lip, and the merriment brightened in his eye.



"Did you say," asked the Squire of the pallid child—"did you say that you would never see your brother again?"

The girl shook her head, as much as to say that her remark was too sorrowfully true.

"Then," said the Squire, "I'll tell you what;—you won't take the trouble of looking round the corner, for I'll answer for it he's waiting there."

And how was the Squire's joke received? By the laugh—the glad and joyous laugh—of himself; and by the child with no word of anger or of complaint, but with a start—a start so sudden and so fearful, that it made the blood chill within my veins, and the hair upon my head rise up and stand upon end. I shall never forget that start. I have seen people dreadfully moved when some sudden terror has overtaken them, or when some news of a sad and desolating character has suddenly come to their knowledge; but I never saw any start so violent and so awful as that of this little timid girl. It seemed, by her look of utter hopelessness, of lamentable dejection, and perfect desolation, as if she had started until she had reached the very end of a long and wretched life! The Squire appeared to have entered with his jest into her inmost soul, and there turned the drop—the very little drop—that remained of aught like sweetness, into the bitterness of gall. And wherefore was this? Let those tell who have known equal sorrows, and had them equally unpitied and derided. I should hope that there can be few such; and there can be no doubt that those few are not amongst the circle of my readers: for them the sun of prosperity may probably have shone for many years with bright and unclouded beams; or, if such be not the case, and Grief, with his darkening mantle, has overshadowed their life, and forced them to bewail the loss of friends or fortune, they have surely had some who have joined them in their tears, and wept in soul-reviving sympathy. That Sorrow makes his visit to the palaces of kings, as well as to the hovels of beggars, is a fact too trite to be worthy of mention; yet it is a comfort attached to the woes of the former, that their miseries are never made the subject of heartless brutality and careless revelry. It is a comfort to the great man that

"His state hath this condition in't."

But it may be right for me to explain why the girl started so much as she did upon the occasion which I have named. She started from the force of recollection—a force before which all heroism is vain, and all pretended obduracy fades into nothingness. She recollected days dear—only too dear—to her; and in the memory of them her soul melted within her, and her speech and courage forsook her. She thought of one particular day which never was absent from her mind, and yet which was not ordinarily so forcibly present as the Squire had now brought it before her. She mused of that brother upon whom she had depended for her support, and who had made the very humble fare he was able to provide for her, queenly food from the fond affection with which he bestowed it. She recollected the day her brother stood in that churchyard—and *stood just round that very corner to which the Squire had alluded*—to which the Squire had alluded as a joke and a jest.

When the hand of death was upon that tender and loving relative, and sad Decline was writing his conquering name on the pallid and cold brow of his victim, her brother knew that he was sinking into the quiet and peaceful grave; and, excepting for the sake of his sister, who had been left to his charge by dying and affectionate parents, and who needed his hand to earn for her her daily sustenance, and the means of having a home and a shelter from the wind and storm, he felt no wish to remain longer a poverty-stricken and wearied inhabitant of this lower and afflicted world. Whatever wish he might have had yet to live, for the sake of his sister, he felt that Providence had determined that he was to be gathered to his fathers, and, accordingly, he was perfectly resigned to yield up his spirit to the merciful Power which had bestowed it. He had endeavoured so to live as that death might have no terrors for him: in firm faith and pious trust the years of his brief existence had passed away; and now, with humble, but with confident hope, he was about to lay down the burthen of the mortal coil. He had then requested his sister to walk with him, and she had left the humble cottage at which they lived, pretending to lean upon his arm, but, in reality, propping up his faltering frame, and bearing him up from falling by her weak and youthful arm. She was ever content to go whither he chose that their course should be directed: usually he had liked her to go with him to the fields, where the wild flowers grew most luxuriantly, or where the singing-birds most frequented, and uttered their soft and pleasing melody. He had had a natural and powerful taste for the pure and the beautiful, and loved to frequent the places where purity and beauty were to be found. Upon this occasion he directed their steps (to the astonishment of his sister) to the quiet rustic churchyard.

"Why have you brought me here?" she then asked of him.

"I wish to point out to you," he answered her, "one quiet corner;" and he drew her towards the very one which was alluded to by the Squire. "My dear little sister," he then addressed her, "I am sinking very fast, and before long I hope I shall be with our dear parents, who have gone to heaven: before another month comes, my body will be with the quiet dead."

"Do not talk in that way, brother," she answered, "or you will break my heart. You have been so kind, so very, very kind to me, that I could not live without you."

"I must leave you to the care of Heaven, which will not forsake or forget you. I am sorry, very sorry, for your sake—for your sake only—that I am dying; but I *must* die, and so I ought not to unman myself, but to meet death with courage."

"Dear brother!" were the sole words that his grieving and troubled sister could utter.

"I have a request to make you, dear girl," he resumed, "and it is this:—I have been very fond, when I have been strong and well, of coming

here to think of death, and to sit in the shade of a spreading elm-tree planted near the corner to the right, and to wish that if I died young I might there be buried, and sleep in peace and blessedness. And much more earnestly when I found that my health was failing, and that my strength was giving way daily more and more, did I love to direct my faltering steps here, and muse over the same delightful thoughts. Very dear have these thoughts been to me; they have afforded me consolation when the unkindness and rudeness of the world pressed upon me, and, excepting when I have thought of leaving you, I have found my gladdest moments spent in sitting beneath the shady elm, and thinking of the day when I might lie beneath it. But even more, since Death has been felt by me to be just about to finish the work which Decline long ago began, have I joyed (if my faint limbs could bear me up so far, and if your ever-ready care would allow me to go out alone) to drag my body to this same spot, and there to long for the time to come when the world would cease to trouble, and pain and agony have done their worst. Promise me, then, dear sister, that when I am dead you will get me buried here: it has been the wish of my health and of my sickness—of my gladness and my grief. The elm-tree I love shall wave over me, and the cool breeze fan me in my silent slumbers.”

A request like this, of course, cannot be refused; and, with tears in her eyes and misery in her heart, the sister promised that his desires should be complied with, should his predictions prove too true for her happiness. Perhaps many of my readers may think that I have overdrawn my description of the composed and serene manner in which this young man could talk and think of death. But I can assure them in solemn truth that they are mistaken. I have known men and women—ay, and boys and girls—young in years and rich in the goods that the world has to offer—talk of the quiet grave and the calm churchyard with as much composure, and even joyfulness, as if they were discoursing of an intended journey they were about to make, to see some pleasant scenery, or to meet some beloved friend. And a sight truly delightful it is to see youth thus contemplating and anticipating, as it were, their dissolution. I say it is delightful, for it shows the infinite superiority of mind over body, and proves how religion and things unseen can triumph over all lower things and all pleasures visible. In very deed, to one who has reached to maturity, and has shared in the common lot of humanity, there can be but little of dreadful or discomposing in the abstract idea of quitting earth.—Who of us has not lost friends over whom we have shed tears so bitter that the very remembrance of them is grievous and heavy to be borne?—Who of us has not met disappointment in his fondest and dearest wishes—in the plans over which he has thought for years with intense anxiety and never-ceasing earnestness?—Who of us has not found pain and anguish attend his wearied body, and make him sigh for a deliverance from the bondage of the flesh as well as

from that of the mind?—Who of us has not felt all these? And, having felt them, what can there be to us in death, but that which conscience may suggest, which can have aught in it of terror—ought in it but of light, and freedom, and happiness?

But I am wandering from my story, although, indeed, the subject is the same. The young man died; and the sister, of whom he had been the sole support and comfort, hastened, when her first bitterness of grief was over, to seek the clergyman, and then to request that her brother might be buried in the quiet spot where he had wished to lie. It so happened that a gentleman of fortune, and of a kind heart, was calling upon the minister at the time she went, and he interested himself in the little girl, so that her desire was heard and attended to. The thing was settled, and the child went to her home—*her almost solitary home*—with a kind of pleasure in her heart that her brother's last wish had been acceded to, and that he would sleep where in life he had dreamingly reposed, and where he had anticipated his body should rest when his spirit had departed from it.

Upon the day appointed for the funeral to take place, some few, who wished to show respect to the memory of a poor but honest man, followed his body to its last home; and in front of all walked the poor little one—the stricken dove—the shorn lamb—the chief (oh! how much the chief!) mourner, attending her supporter and comfort to his tomb. As they walked, who could have seen the child bathed in tears, sobbing such sobs as seemed ready to burst her overpressed and bruised heart, without deeply compassionating her afflicted condition? Along the road which led from the little cottage which she and her brother had occupied, even to the gate of the churchyard, she had followed the bier, without once raising her eyes from the ground, although a mob of people lined the road to behold a funeral—so favourite a sight with the lower orders.

But as soon as they came to the gate of the burial-ground, how eagerly did the eyes of the child look about to see whether they had indeed dug the grave *exactly* in the place to which her brother had called her attention! She seemed to herself to be performing a sacred duty to her lost relative by scrutinizing every inch of ground, to find whether the elm-tree shaded him precisely in the manner he would have liked it to do, and whether the soft breeze would come to the very point where his dear and treasured remains were about to be interred. Her request to the clergyman had been complied with with minute exactness; and she saw the dear one of her heart placed in the grave in the identical spot on which his strong desires had been fixed,—*just round the very corner to which the Squire had alluded.*

Ever since the day of the funeral had the sorrowing sister made the churchyard her daily haunt; a pleasing feeling seemed to come over her mind when she entered its boundaries—for it appeared to her as if she were then nearer to her brother who slumbered below the sod.

Stern necessity had forced her to ask for alms to keep the life within her own body, and the natural cravings of hunger compelled her to seek for gifts of charity from those who were disposed to offer them; but she greatly preferred to make her place of solicitation the churchyard—for she fancied that those whose steps were thither directed had perhaps come there to sigh over the graves of treasured relatives, and that she should meet, from their congenial feelings, tokens of compassion; and that, if she failed in gaining money from them, she should gain the expression of their pity and kindness. But more especially did she like to come and sit near her brother's tomb: like the miser brooding over his treasured gold—like the mother watching near the bedside of her only infant—like the author intent upon the work which he fancies is to gain him the fame for which he sighs,—so did the child remain, with her eyes bent upon the grave, and her heart and affections centred within that cemetery. She liked to make that her seat whence she might ask for alms, for the sake of the brother whom she had lost—for she valued herself only as the sister of that one whom she so deeply loved, and not from any individual feeling. She was, when the Lord of Eglantine Hall met her, on her way to take her seat by the only spot on which in the whole world she cared to be,—*just round that very corner to which the Squire had alluded.*

Lest there be any of my readers who are tempted to inquire, “after all, what great harm the Squire had done to the little girl?” I shall endeavour here to describe it. He had brought back, in all its force and energy, to the mind of the child, a whole world of misery and wretchedness. He had made her live over again years too brief for her in their duration, yet far too long in their memories: when she was just beginning in some degree to master the pain and sorrow which the death of her brother had occasioned, Mr. Lambton had brought back that pain and sorrow in such a way as human strength is too weak to conquer, and human courage is too poor to struggle with and resist. We all know that human nature is apt to have its griefs soothed and allayed, in some measure, by Time—and that this is peculiarly the case in youth. Now, Time had begun this kindly office with the child; but the Squire had clipped the fleeting wings of Time, and forced him to return to the churchyard. What harm had the Squire done to the child?—I will tell:—

Left as an orphan to the care of one brother, she had found her life and light in that brother's affectionate and zealous care. And when Death, with his poisoned dart, smote him, and left that little sister to weep over the hours they had passed together, and to mourn the absence of a supporter, as well as a loving friend, it was almost too severe a stroke for the youthful sufferer to endure. Yet, by the strength of Heaven, she was enabled to hold up, and to carry on her duties without actual despondency and despair. But now the additional anguish of unkindness, and that upon a subject so dear and so sacred in her mind, seemed to make her misery too great

again. The Squire appeared to have overfilled the cup of sorrow her tiny hands had scarcely strength before to bear.

The *bitterness* of grief is often derived from man, though the grief itself may have been sent by Providence.

“What harm had the Squire done the child?”

He had made to feel wretched indeed, and broken-hearted, one whom the Eternal God,—the God, if I dare so to speak, pre-eminently of children, (for of such is His kingdom,)—came down from heaven to gladden and to save.

~ It is true that Heaven had made her sorrowful by its visitations, but Heaven had not given the *sting* to the mind from which she smarted. In the severest sufferings with which Heaven visits mankind, (and that these are intense, I think no rational Christian will attempt to deny,) there ever is the extremest point of misery wanting, and that is the unkindness of the motive.

If Heaven deprives us of the one we love as our own soul, it takes that one to bliss unspeakable, and designs to wean us from a carnal and perishing world, and to fix our affections upon joys unchangeable, pure, and undefiled.

The motive, then, is that of unbounded kindness and goodness, although the act by which that kindness shows itself is harrowing to our hearts and tenderest affections. But in the harshness or the coldness, the indifference or the scorn of men, there is the cruelty of the motive to make us utterly miserable. It is not designed to benefit any one or to improve any one,—it is simply to do us injury, and to make us wretched. We can gain no ray of comfort from the darkness thus thrown over our path—no drop of consolation from the hard rock of man’s stone-heartedness.

And such was the Squire’s jest. There was no word of consolation to be derived from it: it made her think of death, without recalling to her mind a life beyond it,—it made her recollect her sad condition, without showing to her how it could be ameliorated.

Such was the Squire’s jest.

The Squire chuckled heartily over the manner in which his joke had been received. Even those who had seen him at his own table, happy over his port of the most superior vintages, and merry in the society of those who had hunted with him the sturdy fox or the fleeting hare, could have had no idea, unless they could have seen him upon the occasion I have just described, *how* merry and *how* happy he could be. His companions of the Turf, who were wont to denominate him a good fellow and a jolly, would not have known how good a fellow he was, or how jolly, unless they had seen him then. His merriment was actually childlike. (Pshaw! that is not a good word at all, after I have just been describing the little girl.) He seemed to know no care, but to be perfectly happy in his own joke and in his own facetiousness of character. He called me to take his

arm and walk home with him; and all the way that we went he found somewhat to praise in everything that we saw, and in every sound that we heard. The flowers grew prettily by the roadside,—the birds sang sweetly in the hedges,—the cows lowed as they had never lowed before,—and the very pigs grunted in a harmony melodious to his ears. No clouds that appeared would bring rain, or, if they did, there would come only so much as would refresh the fields, and render them more fertile and lively. The breeze that sported by us brought health to the sick, and life to the whole creation; and the people whom we met were all amiable in their character and way of going on, and all seemed to be disposed to do us a good turn whenever an opportunity offered by which they could show the sincerity of their friendship.

So did all things in the Squire's eyes assume a soft and pleasing aspect; And why was this?—Why, but because he was happy? He had been made happy by his own jest; and it will show us how sadly the heart must suffer when all outward merriment is evidently gone from it, if we view the exceeding gladness of a person when a cause which appears slight can move him to such delightful pleasure and gay-heartedness. I mean that, when a feather has a power sufficient to bear a man upon the surface, it must be indeed a dead and heavy weight which, in spite of his own buoyancy, can still sink him to the bottom. The Squire was, indeed, a pleased gentleman upon that day; and Nature had never worn such shining robes as upon that happy occasion. The walk home did not by any means fatigue him, although it would usually have had that effect.

After dinner, before the ladies had retired from the table, the Squire called his dogs around him, and, placing a puppy luxuriously at ease in his lap, and stretching himself in his chair till his head rested upon the back of it comfortably, the Squire filled himself a glass of port wine to the very brim. 'This he then inspected with such an epicurian eye as was worthy of observation. He held it up to the wax-light in front of him, and noticed in short and emphatic syllables its ruby colour and its excellent condition.

All at table knew that he was going to tell a good story, for these marks all indicated such a result. These were the preliminaries, without which no contract of wit was ever made;—these the prompter's bell, without which the comedy never began. 'These matters being finished, the lord of Eglantine Hall commenced his narrative, and made the whole company aware of the details which related to the poor child whom he had met in the churchyard. There were not wanting copious accounts of how the girl looked when he first saw her, and what she said, and how much of it he believed, and how she looked at the last.

His own delight at the success of his witticism was acknowledged very frankly and readily; and he chuckled still in glee and pleasure at the recollection of the good thing he had said, and of the manner in which it was received.

Over and over was the joke reiterated, and each time some small points before forgotten were added to the tale to make it more pungent and more "peculiar," as the Squire liked to call his jests and his drolleries, to distinguish them from the puny wit of other men.

May I crave, gentle reader, a word or two with you? A friendly critic, who has just glanced over my manuscript, declares that I have very much overdrawn the character of the Squire; and that, in an age like the present, no one would be unkind for the sake of unkindness: and the same censor affirms that this country abounds on all sides with persons of active benevolence and generous sympathy, and that there never was a period when so much money was willingly given for the purposes of charity. Now, in reference to this remark, I wish to know from my reader whether he agrees with the critic in his opinion. If so, I beg to address some observations in self-justification, for I would not willingly consent to be thought one who overcolours his pictures, or who delights in making people out worse than they really are.

First as to the Squire:—I can confidently say that such men as he are to be met with, and are by no means uncommon. They are unkind, not for the sake of unkindness, but for the zest they feel in their own witticisms; and they sacrifice at the shrine of Laughter what they would never deliberately lay upon the altar of Spite or Malice. As to the next point,—I am most ready to admit, and I feel happiness in doing so, that there are many in this country who are eminent for their virtuous and liberal deeds, although their native retirement and modesty would fain conceal the merit which cannot be hid. There are some, whom I am proud to number amongst my friends, who devote time, money, and talents to the service of the humblest, the weakest, and the most desolate of mankind. No word of mine could add anything to their renown, for such they have, although they "do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame;" and no censure of mine, were I recreant enough to pen or utter a censure against them, could affect them in the slightest degree. As to the last opinion, "that there never was a period when so much money was given *in charity*," I confess myself a sceptic.

That a vast sum is given away no one can deny who looks at the newspapers, and beholds the columns filled with subscriptions for the distressed sufferers by an earthquake, a fire, or any other severe calamity; in fact, whenever subscriptions are asked, and plans are formed for obtaining them,—of whatever kind those plans may be,—contributions are sure to come to further the several objects in view. The point, however, remains unsettled, whether, because the money is given away, it is *in charity*. That much is, I am perfectly sure; that much also is not, I am in my own mind as certain. I have observed, (for I like to go through life with my eyes open,)—I have observed many a man, who stands high in the world as a liberal and generous character, when he has been taking a walk through the

streets of London; and I have seen him shake his cane at a little beggar-child, who was looking terribly ill and weak, because she presumed to beg a halfpenny of him; and I have heard him order out of his way, in no gentle tone, the suppliant man who was afflicted both with poverty and sickness; and the next day I have seen the same gentleman's name displayed in the *Times*, or the *Chronicle*, as a donor of twenty guineas to an hospital. Was this charity?

I have known others, of whom I have heard from poor people in their own vicinity, that it was impossible to induce them to come to their humble abodes, or listen to their sad tales, though, in truth, their children were dying—actually dying—for want of food; and that they ordered their servants to drive these poor people from the door if they ever again presumed to come there: and I have perceived the names of these very same people affixed to an account of a dress-ball or a concert, for the benefit of Spital-fields weavers or Paisley operatives. Ready they proved themselves to expend many guineas in decorating an assembly-room, on an uncertainty of being refunded; and to use all their energies for the cause they had espoused. The bill of the concert bore their names in letters of six inches, and the ball-room had their personal presence in the quadrille:—and was this charity? I have known others who have been applied to by one of the gentle and confiding sex, born in the humblest and poorest rank of life, who, after a succession of persuasions and bribes from a gentleman, (by education and manners,) has at length consented to yield to his eloquence, and accept his money, (for the sake of an aged mother or a sick father it may be, and it often is so.) and to believe in the truth of a gentleman's word, and the honour of a gentleman's character; and then, (alas! for the story, for it is a hackneyed one,) he has cast her forth to the cold and bitter world, to support an infant as well as herself, and to sigh over the remembrance of days of innocence and joy never to return. Then has the poor girl, in utter despair of gaining a livelihood by any means than those which she dreads to think of, told her woes to the people to whom I have alluded. And what has been their reply? They have told her of their utter disgust of a female who could forget her modesty; and have assured her that she might seek a friend elsewhere, for that they would never give a crust of bread or a drink of water to such "a shameless being!"

They have surely forgotten Him who, whilst He bade the offender "Sin no more," did so with kind and hopeful words; and who *condemned* not even the woman who had forgotten vows which the girl to whom I allude had never made,—she who had rendered him, who was to be the partner of her joys and sorrows, wretched by her treachery and unfaithfulness. This has been their method. But the same people who have behaved in this manner, I have afterwards found to be actively engaged in canvassing for the admission of some favoured candidate into one of the

public free-schools of this country, and using every effort that the name of the particular child whose cause they espoused should be at the head of the poll. Canvassing letters are despatched by every post,—indirect means



of every kind are made use of,—money is laid out in cards and circulars, —to accomplish a scheme they have consented to take in hand and to advance. Perhaps by this the election is secured, and the child is admitted to the rights and privileges of a member of the school. The thanks of the relatives cannot be sufficiently given to these active friends for their countenance and support.—Was this charity? And where alms are given apparently for the sake of charity, and are certainly bestowed liberally and freely, I doubt very much whether some of the rich, who are kind to the poor, are not so, in those very instances in which their gifts are rendered, for their own sakes, and not for those of their humbler brethren. I do not mean but that a wealthy person is right in doing good for his own sake, inasmuch as he should look, for his own future recompense for the deeds done, in faith and love. But it is in the following way that I mean, —a way which, having no high desire or heavenward tendency about it, cannot but be wrong. I do not say that the poor are neglected by these rich men; on the contrary, they do show them pity and kindness, and in so far they are worthy of commendation. They take care of them, but then they do not try to give them such good gifts as are worthy of their high character as men;—not of their individual character, for that may be

mean and paltry ; but of their general one, as rational and immortal men. They are looked upon in the light very much of ornaments,—china ornaments,—for the mantel-shelf (and every reader who knows the care which is taken of these pieces of finery and luxury will readily perceive that, in saying this much, I at once acquit these rich men of any desire to injure or to neglect the poor); but how little do they seek to place the flowers—the true and unfading flowers—of virtue and peace, of religion and piety, within them. They who were made to have the plants of faith and holiness carefully set within them, and to show such flowers as would flourish to the honour of the great Author of their existence, are treated merely as stands to hold the twisted papers with which to light tapers for others when they need them. The object is not to make the poor happy in their own domestic and dear relationships, and to render them pleasing in the eyes of the Holy One: were it so, then indeed would the actuating motive which prompts to the exercise of their charity be that divine feeling which ever seeks at once God's glory and man's good. Again, how many, who are called liberal to the poor, never deny themselves one gratification for the sake of the suffering! Do they go to one play less? Do they visit the ball-room a whit less often? Do they stint themselves of one piece of finery or of one iota of luxury? Far from it. They give of their superfluity. They treat the poor like unto the variously-coloured shavings which may sometimes be seen adorning the grates of drawing-rooms: when no fire is required for comfort or for cheerfulness, *then* do the shavings come into remembrance,—they fill up a blank which is found to be so; but were the fire required, they would never be thought of. There is another thing I have remarked which I think takes off from the genuine kindness of the rich towards the poor; and that is, how some of the former delight to tell their acquaintances of the avariciousness and greediness of the latter. Their constant observation is—

“ These people are always wanting something ; there positively is no satisfying them. If you give them a house, they will ask you for a garden ; and if a garden, for an orchard ; and if an orchard, then for a park.”

When the poor are not neglected, these speeches are but too frequently made about them, and uttered even by liberal persons. The benefited are pictured to resemble the china dragons which are such favourite and handsome ornaments upon drawing-room chiffonniers: attention is called to them for their singularity; but that which is principally singled out in the representation of them is their widely-opened mouth, or their far-spreading and grasping claw! Whether the imagination of the artist has not made the claw and the mouth so sharp and so wide, I am not wise enough to determine.

There is no class of people, perhaps, whom the rich generally patronize and regard more than the very aged ; and very properly,—for when the eyes begin to fail and the limbs to totter, the ears to grow deaf and the

heart to beat slowly and languidly, then surely is it the period for those blessed with sight and thought, with hearing and activity, to exert themselves for their help, and render those so disabled as easy and as comfortable as their circumstances will permit. An additional power is perhaps imparted to the young and the robust, beyond what they need for themselves, in order that they may use their strength and energies for those who are fast descending down the vale of years. Blessings be on the hoary head which is found in the way of piety and honour! And blessed be he, whoever he may be, who, while youthful, dedicates his time and his talents, in truth and honesty, to the service of the infirm and aged! But whilst the aged poor are thus patronized, are they not sometimes regarded somewhat in the light of pictures, whilst they are thus valued and taken care of? Their venerable countenances are admired as "heads from the antique," but which are not seen in their proper colours until touched up by a modern hand. The interest which attaches to one of these patriarchs is derived from the circumstance of his enjoying a silvery old age, from the moonlight reflected upon him by the kindness of others. In this case, an old man, unless he had something about him interesting to the individual fancy, would be a very indifferent object; it is the identical one they select to help who assumes a form of grace and beauty. And then the person who is so patronized and so aided must seem obliged for every kindness, however minute, and every favour, however small it may be. The sea of joy which lies within the breast, like a mighty ocean intended to be moved by some really noble gale, bearing health and comfort in its full fair breezes, is now to be agitated "*to waft a feather*" which has been placed upon its surface by the hand of a patron. But as I am speaking of the old, let me slightly digress to remark how it grieves me to see some tall and vigorous man, of, it may be, but five-and-twenty years, toss to the worn and wasted creature, over whose head the threescore and ten years have passed with their swift flight, a copper, which he is obliged painfully to stoop for, and yet to seem elated and overjoyed to obtain. The copper is given, perhaps in joke, perhaps because it is asked for, perhaps from a momentary feeling of kindness; but of the manner in which it is given there can be no doubt, —that is a positive unkindness.

A venerable man, if he be a beggar-man, must then go on like those ornaments of the drawing-room, (I call them such, for I know of no prettier ones,) sportive little kittens, which are content to run round and round after their own tails,—for he is to seem equally playful and happy in the midst of his dull monotonous round of life. After the gentlemen have drunk out the Burgundy, he is to play and frolic because of the cork that is thrown to him. If the kitten merely took things quietly, and made itself as easy as present circumstances would admit, it would be called a stupid and inanimate creature, unworthy of the kindness shown to it: it

must go on as if it were half mad with pleasure before it gives satisfaction and seems to merit what is given to it. The old man must be happy at his good luck, or he is not thought deserving of it.

There is another point which I think an error in the treatment of some of the rich—the benevolent part of the rich—to the poor, which I must here allude to. It is this,—that they never will encourage them to rise above the exact station in which they were when they were first met with. I do not mean to blame them because they do not try to make gentlemen of peasants, and fit companions for the ball-room from followers of the plough ; but I do certainly object to the feeling which leads some people to crush the intellect of those below themselves, and to repress the rising wish of an humble man to gain knowledge unconnected with his own particular trade or calling. They say, “He is a poor fellow, and so long as he can get enough to eat and drink, and a good bed to lie on, he ought to make himself contented ; this wish to be great ruins half the world.”

But I think that such speeches are founded on a false judgment, or on an ungenerous pride. They look upon the poor as a mere collection of shells—those favourite and beautiful ornaments of so many. They are content to collect them together, and to take care of them ; but after they have done so, they assort them according to the place where they were found, and not according to the different orders to which they really belong. One man is as different from another man, as one shell is from another shell proportionately in value ; and it is as little reasonable to suppose that, because we find a poor man amongst other poor men, he must be no better than those who surround him in intellect and moral grandeur, as it would be to judge that, because a shell, of which there existed in our country only a few specimens, was found amongst a heap of periwinkles and cockles, it was no more valuable than they.

The ruling passion is said to be so strong, that it is strong in death equally as in life,—and mine is certainly powerful enough : it is one of deep sympathy with the distressed and the oppressed, from whatever cause they may be so ; whether it be lack of fortune, influence, or health, that plunges them into poverty ; or persecution, for the sake of religious or political differences of opinion ; or personal dislike, that renders them afflicted by other men. I believe this ruling passion is pretty well evidenced by the manner in which everything is connected in my mind with the sad and stricken. Each thing around affords scope for a simile, but it is a simile which has reference to the lowly and the miserable. The instances I have lately given are fully sufficient, I imagine, to mark this out to my readers.

I have no doubt that many ladies, upon whom I have had the honour of calling, have wondered why I so earnestly inspected the ornaments upon their *chiffonniers*, and still more earnestly the ornaments upon their heads. And very little did they suspect on what my mind was really

musings at the time whilst my eyes were so fixedly placed upon things so different. Probably that pride in the elegance of their houses which is so conspicuous in the gentle sex, led them to imagine that I was lost in delight at the finery on their shelves; and that self-approbation of their own beauty which is (if I may be permitted to say so) not less evident in the fairer portion of the human race, made them conclude that it was of the face, and not of the finery about it, that I was so interested a spectator. An idea of the poor being in my thoughts whilst gold head-ornaments and china vases were before me, I may safely assume never once crossed their minds.

If we place the poor as an altar in our domestic temples on which to place the fire of our earnest faith in Heaven, and constant desire to fulfil its will, then will they be ornamental as well as useful. Let us endeavour to make our alms-deeds real and genuine charity; not to call them by that dignified and holy name when they have no claim to the designation. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in men's philosophy; and there are many things which are denominated, and which pass with the world for benevolence and kindness, which are in verity no more than heartless pomposity or senseless extravagance. The widow's debts are paid, that the advertisement of thanks may fill a column of the newspaper; and the prisoner is released from his bondage, that he may tell the tale of his liberation wheresoever he wandereth:

I have said that "if we place the poor as an altar in our domestic temples, on which to place the fire of our earnest faith in Heaven, they will then be indeed ornamental;" and I now add that, "if we place the altar,—the *mere conspicuous altar*,—*there, without the fire*, it will become a dead and valueless pillar, erected without a true reason, and will altogether put away from view the fire which it was intended should rise from it. There is a charity which does its good for the sake of the objects which it aids, and of the Heaven which is over them with its protecting power. And how blessed is such a charity! The treasures of the East cannot equal the riches that it affords; the favour of approving conscience, and approving Heaven, is upon it; and for it an eternity of delight is in reserve!

Each aided man should be considered as an altar dedicated to Heaven; and the fire of love and faith should be placed there,—a living fire, which, *like the Spirit of old, may rest upon each one of the meanest of men!*

But I am sure that my readers will have been blaming me for this very lengthened digression; and I plead guilty to the charge, and deserve their censures. Let him, however, who has been passing by an old-remembered haunt of former days, and who has felt himself compelled, as it were, to visit it, although he had urgent business to carry him a different way—let him plead my excuse for me. I meant to touch upon the sub-

ject,—just to *touch* upon it; and from the interest that subject has in my eyes, I have wandered far away, through many pages, from my narrative.

I left the Squire at his noble Hall; and I believe I have given my readers so complete an insight into the character of that gentleman, from the brief sketches I have made concerning him, as to render it unnecessary for me to give any additional details. It is right, however, for me to record (and I do so the more willingly in case he should peruse this narrative, and consider I have done him an injustice) the Squire's unbounded hospitality. Each day found his table surrounded with guests, and to a late hour each night the wine-cups still remained upon the table, and the bacchanalian songs were yet unfinished. Each morning fresh parties of pleasure were made,—to visit some abbey, miles distant, or to inspect the beauties of some adjacent country town. The Squire's wish was to make his guests as happy and as merry as possible.

The time, however, at length drew near when my visit, as well as that of Mrs. Vincent, must be concluded. The Squire was almost in tears when he heard of it. I had been the companion of his walks in the village, and his rides into the neighbouring towns; and it was perhaps rare for him to find a lady who could show such apparent interest as Mrs. Vincent did in thrice-told tales, which had but little to amuse at their commencement. Mrs. Vincent was one of those persons whom Nature seems to have adapted for listeners: for half an hour together could she sit to listen to what was said by a boy at Eton to whom the Squire was a "fag;" and to hear the much more brilliant remarks which the Squire had made to a brother-fag, in reference to his tyrannical master.

"You will not go?" said he, addressing me. "I shall not, positively, know what to do without you, for you understand the art of feeding the dogs admirably well—indeed you do. You treat them just alike, and that keeps 'em all in good humour, and makes them pleasant. My dogs are not fellows to be treated unfairly; they know what's what, and they'll take care to act up to their rights. They'll make their own master give them their Bill of Rights, like the barons did to old King John, you know."

Those of my readers who may never happen to have been introduced into a kennel of fox-hounds may feel some wonder at the great applause which my treatment of the dogs called forth from Mr. Lambton;—those who have had the pleasure of the *entrée* will, I am sure, readily understand it. A few words of explanation to the uninitiated ought to be given.

A stranger is a very unwise man who, with the wish for the health and safety of his limbs, adventures himself alone into a kennel of these noble creatures: and when he enters it even with the owner of the dogs, I should strongly advise him to keep as near as possible to their lord and master.

If the owner should propose to the stranger to feed the dogs, (which is done by dealing out portions from time to time,) I would counsel him to give them in rotation, not missing any one when his turn comes round; for the dogs keep accurate reckonings, and are strict fellows at having their due.

It was my exactitude on this point which called forth the Squire's commendation, and made him think with a sigh of the period when he should have to visit the kennel without my companionship. The dogs had made a bond of union, which it would be hard to loosen.

Vain, however, was the Squire's regret:—the day arrived when my visit was appointed to be terminated, and I bade adieu to Mr. Lambton and his hospitable roof. As Vincent drove me home we talked over the sojourn I had made at the Hall, and I was fain to own that, so far as these were indicated by the goodheartedness of a jovial reception to ladies and gentlemen, from whatever place they might come, and gifts of claret and champagne,—of venison and turtle,—the Squire was not deficient in generosity and nobleness of mind.

'There is a certain degree of estimableness in such a character; it is undoubtedly far better than that of the mean selfish person who begrudges every mouthful he gives to the occupants of the seats at his own dinner-table, and who places starved chickens and *vin ordinaire* before his injured guests. Yet I felt as strongly as ever the Squire's conduct towards his humbler brethren, and I determined to speak more fully with Vincent upon this subject on our arrival at the Parsonage. The grandeurs of the Hall had not diminished my anxiety to view the rustic porch and village church again; and with a glad heart I drew up at the door where my valued and dear friends resided.

How delightful it was to stretch out one's legs at ease beneath the plain dining-table at the Parsonage, loll back in one's chair, and see the faces of such people only as one cared for and esteemed! How different from feasting on the greatest luxuries and drinking the choicest liqueurs at the house of a stranger, and, moreover, of one of whom we entertain no favourable opinion. I was expressing this to Mrs. Vincent after dinner was finished on the day of my arrival at my old quarters, and she did even more than coincide with me; as she had been sighing for the society of her husband whilst absent from him, and, of course, felt a joy much more strong than I could do upon seeing him again. "Friendship," says the French proverb, "is Love without his wings;" and assuredly the one is not near so anxious as the other to fly to the one he cares for when absent from him.

"But you are mistaken, my good fellow," answered Vincent, "if you think that you are going to pass even the few days you consent to remain with us solely in our company, for to-morrow I hope that another guest will be added to our circle."

Mrs. Vincent, of course, was ready directly with inquiries about the new visitor upon hearing this.

"Is it Mr. —, or Captain —, or Major —? If it is none of these, perhaps it is old Mr. —? or his grandson come from school?" were questions eagerly demanded by the impatient lady. To torment his wife, from the love of a joke, Vincent held out for a long time from giving the desired intelligence, until Mrs. Vincent was actually getting in despair; I then joined my prayers with hers, and at last Vincent informed us that it was "Mr. Delmont." I was but little wiser for the information, for I had never heard of such a gentleman before; and my only feeling in the matter was one of annoyance at the idea of any intruder upon our domestic privacy. But it was very different with Mrs. Vincent.

"Oh! is Mr. Delmont coming?" she cried out: "I am so glad!"

"May I ask who this Mr. Delmont is?" I inquired. "He must be some captivating personage. I am sure, if I were you, Vincent, I should be as jealous as Othello at the way in which your wife hears your announcement."

"Quite the contrary," answered Vincent; "I can assure you I am every bit as glad as my wife; and it gives me sincere pleasure to see her so delighted at the news. Mr. Delmont is such a man as any one would be wise in esteeming, and happy in knowing."

"Who is Mr. Delmont, Vincent, for I am thirsting to know?"

"He is a very dear and valued friend of mine—one whom I have known for five years, and have loved him better each month than I did that preceding."

"Is he a young man, or an old one?"

"That is a question that I am too polite to answer. Old and young are comparative terms; and it is a great chance whether, if you denominate any person so, you are not lowered in the estimation of the individual to whom you are talking. Delmont is forty-five."

"And is he a clergyman?"

"Oh no! he is in a different profession."

"And which may that profession be?"

"The medical."

"I was not aware that you had any one you cared about in that profession; I shall be very glad to make his personal acquaintance."

"It was but five years ago that I had the pleasure to make the intimate acquaintance of one of that body; and I can only advise you, as a friend, to follow my example when you meet with one as estimable in all respects as Mr. Delmont."

"Does he reside near to you?"

"No; he lives in a country town, many miles distant; but when he can get a week to spare from his arduous duties, he seeks the retirement of the Parsonage to pass it with us."

"How, may I ask, did you become known to him, and he to you?"

"By a mere accident, which I will leave to him to narrate to you when he sees you, as I have no fear but you will become friendly, and that he will willingly give you the *eventful* history. It is not a very *strange* and marvellous account, but it is *eventful* so far as our intimacy and regard are implicated."

"Will you then let me, as I am forbidden to hear, now, this tale of yours about your medical friend, allow me to narrate to you what I have seen of the Squire during my residence in his domicile, and again ask your interference, for the sake of the poor people of his village, in such a way as you may deem best for the interests of the villagers themselves?"

"Assuredly; but suppose I hear first what my wife says upon the matter. I see which way you lean by the manner in which you introduce your account: now I am anxious to know her opinions; and if I find that they coincide with yours, I will then go into all the minutiae with you, and endeavour to make my mode of attending to each class of persons suitable to the particular wants of each one amongst them."

Mrs. Vincent was quite as eager as myself in relating to her husband all that she knew, for her opinion was as condemnatory of the Squire's harshness to the poor as mine could possibly be. She was made in the very mould in which angels are fashioned, both as to their visible form and their innate mercy and kindness. She made the sufferings of others her own, and joyed in the joys of the humblest beggar that treads the barren ground. It was with grief, no less strong than mine, that she had heard the tone of heartless levity in which the Squire addressed himself to the poor—merely because they were poor,—and had beheld him convulsed with laughter at the jests he had uttered on purpose to call up the tears into the eyes of an orphan, and to make his own boon-companions smile.

"I am quite satisfied," said Vincent, "or rather, I should say, quite dissatisfied, as to the truth of the charges against the Squire. As I am obliged to go out to visit a poor parishioner who is dying, I have no time just now to hear all your details," (turning to me,) "but my friend Delmont will be no bar to our resuming the subject to-morrow, after dinner is ended."

It was accordingly settled that on the next day the subject should be resumed, after the evening meal, and for the present the discourse was over; for Mr. and Mrs. Vincent went out to the sick man's house, the former to bear spiritual comfort to the dying sufferer, and the latter to carry bodily relief to the wife and children of her afflicted parishioner.

On the next day, whilst I was taking my accustomed walk round the pretty garden which encompassed my friend's small but "snug" mansion, a post-chaise drove up to the door, and the new visitor made his appearance. He was a very intellectual-looking man, of middle age; the front part of his head was bald, and his quiet and piercing eyes showed the

great intelligence of the mind which brightened them. With all their light, however, they had so much benevolence and mildness in them, as tempered their rays, and made them delightful, as well as brilliant. He was dressed in an entire suit of black, and was perfectly the gentleman in every movement and action. I was impressed with a favourable opinion of him the moment I saw him, and was anxious for the time when I should be introduced to him by our mutual ally, Vincent. When the latter came home from his parochial duties, he made the "medical friend" and myself known to each other, and Mr. Delmont was every whit as prepossessing in his conversation as he was in his aspect and demeanour. At the Parsonage-house, as I have, I believe, before mentioned, the lord and lady of the establishment were too busy in their works of active charity throughout the morning to enable them to have much discussion of a private character, excepting in the evening, after toil was over.

I looked forward with more than wonted interest to the after-dinner dialogue on the day of Mr. Delmont's arrival, as I was then to have the account of the origin of his acquaintance with Vincent, and to make known the minute details which called for his interference in the Squire's parish. After dinner was ended, Vincent turned towards Mr. Delmont, and said,—

"I do not know whether you have ever heard of a little work which was published some time ago, called 'Observations by E. W.?'"

"Never, my dear Vincent, I can assure you," answered Delmont; "never in all my life: is it worth reading?"

"Nay, my dear friend, I do not presume to act as critic; but you can, if you please, form an opinion for yourself, as the work lies upon the drawing-room table. That, however, was not my object in asking you. I only wanted to tell you that that gentleman opposite to you is the author of it."

The "medical friend" coloured up at the recollection of the emphatic manner in which he had declared that he had never heard of such a book, and the calm way in which he had asked if it was worthy of a perusal. He began to make his apologies; and to declare how readily he would read the work, and how pleased he was to see the author. He could do no less, although the book is (my readers will agree with me) as stupid as possible, and its author (my acquaintances will add their testimony) is as unattractive as his work.

"Never mind apologies, Delmont," said Vincent. "What I want to say is this,—that this gentleman is meaning to bring out another book, a periodical, in which he will be very sharp upon the medical profession, and denounce the whole race as mercenary and unkind. So you had better take care how you go on before him, or you will find your name figuring away as a mournful example of the whole harsh and money-loving tribe."

"Pardon me, Vincent," cried I, interrupting him; "I am not aware that I have ever given you reason to suppose I would censure, *as a body*, the medical profession. I hold all severity upon bodies of men as senseless."

and unjust. I have ever considered so, and certainly in no case more than in that of the medical profession. I know of no persons whose talents are more shining, and whose qualities of mind and heart are more pleasing, than those of very many amongst that class. A sweeping censure upon their fraternity could only recoil upon the head of one who was vain and silly enough to attack those whose abilities and virtue are known and admired by the people of this country."

"I am sure no one can deny that, if your friend has ever spoken harshly of us, he has made the *amende honorable*," said Delmont. "I am sure the medical profession, *as a body*, must acquit him of unkindness; but it seems some members of it are to suffer in the cause."

"I can assure you," answered I, "I have good grounds for blaming individual persons; and I hold it equally culpable to refrain from showing and expressing one's dissatisfaction at those who oppress the poor, or make themselves notorious by their vices of any description, as to defame a whole class of unoffending and respectable gentlemen. I have heard of an example of an unworthy medical practitioner only a few weeks ago, and in a very neighbouring village, and I intend to make him the subject of one of my sketches."

"That puts me in mind," cried Vincent. "I want to hear from you the details of the mismanagement in the village alluded to, that I may see the best way of attending to what is required, so far as my limited abilities permit. Pray, proceed with the narrative."

Upon this I entered into "a full, true, and particular account" of all the manifold acts of oppression on the part of the Squire, and the many instances of neglect and carelessness on the part of the clergyman, the medical gentleman, the parish officers, and the other functionaries of the village. There was, indeed, much to tell, and each case seemed worse, in my eyes, than the one which had preceded it; and to prove still more the real ill treatment shown to the poor there. The worthy Doctor sympathised in the warmest manner with the poor of the parish to which I had alluded; and Vincent paid the greatest attention to all that was narrated, and marked each point which could be turned to account for his humbler brethren. From his practical knowledge of the manner in which persons in their situations of life should be judiciously and rightly helped forward in their honest exertions, he was enabled to plan out many correct and able ways of aiding them; and he studied so as to avoid giving offence to those who had been placed by Providence in a condition above the sufferers, although they had failed to make any beneficial use of their more exalted position. These points having been arranged, I turned to Vincent, and said that, as this matter was settled, I hoped I should now be permitted to hear the account of the origin of the acquaintance between himself and Mr. Delmont. Vincent addressed Delmont, and called upon him to tell the tale, but this he most positively declined doing.

"Then," said Vincent, "I will not disappoint my friend here, but begin the story.

The medical friend rallied himself on the subject, and expressed his desire that "the silly thing" should be left unsaid, but it would not do; so Mr. Delmont consoled himself with the remark—"Well! it was a good job in one way, however,—it led to Vincent's friendship; and that, indeed, is a true happiness."

We now gave all attention to Vincent, who prepared for a rather lengthy harangue; and, after a minute or two, commenced the tale of

THE MEETING WITH THE DOCTOR.

"Business of a legal nature obliged me, about five years since, to visit a country town, seven miles distant from hence.

"I was compelled, in vindication of my own right to some property, of which the roguery of a lawyer had attempted to defraud me, to institute proceedings against the party, and to produce witnesses who could bear testimony to an act of fraud having been perpetrated many years previous. It is a most difficult matter usually to get all the necessary testimony to a case the facts of which occurred years before; and I am sure that I found it so in this instance. Some of the witnesses had removed to a far distance; others had—I hardly know what to say, but they had done everything to thwart my purpose. After infinite trouble, I found all but one man; but that one was essential to be found. I searched in every direction for him, but without effect. Advertisements were inserted in all the newspapers, but they produced no fruits to crown my labours. I was almost in despair, when I fell in with an old man who had been slightly acquainted with the party I sought, and who told me that he believed that person had gone to reside in a town which was at a considerable distance from that in which I then was staying.

"I quickly placed my clothes in my carpet-bag, and started the very same evening for the other place, in pursuit of the man whose testimony was so necessary for my action. I found myself no better off upon my arrival at the second town than I had been at the first. It was very true that John Lawson (that was the name of the individual I wanted) might be residing there; but he was in the greatest poverty, and in a large town the beggars are as hard to find (I mean to find by name) as a needle in a bundle of hay. (I hope you will pardon this vulgar simile, but we country people are fond of talking plainly, and in a homely way.) I asked in all directions, but without success; and I was half tempted to resign the search, and return home, contented to suffer the loss, since the man was not to be met with whose testimony was necessary for avoiding it. At this juncture, what seemed to be the merest chance brought me to a personal knowledge of the individual I pursued. I had been invited to spend the evening at the house of a respectable gentleman in the town, and there,

amongst others, I met with my *now* valued friend, Mr. Delmont, but who, at that time, was a perfect stranger to me. I was introduced to Mr. Delmont, and he inquired of me whether I intended to remain much longer in that vicinity, as, if so, he could point out the most beautiful rides and walks to my notice. I thanked him, but informed him that I was about to quit the place in despair, as I had been led to hope that my visit there would prove very advantageous to me, but that disappointment had attended me. He asked me, with a smile, if it would be impertinent in him to seek to learn what was the object of my investigation, as it might be possible he could help me. I thanked him very much, and informed him of the name of the man whom I sought. He caught immediately at the name, and said that he knew of such a person, but that it was very likely it was not the same. It would be requisite to see if the description I had received agreed with his. When I had given him my account, he said he feared that there was no proof whatever of the party being the same, as by my account the man I meant had only a sick and weakly son, who stayed with him, whilst he was sure that there was a grand-daughter who lived in the house with the man he spoke of, and nobody else.

"It was thought by Mr. Delmont that the best way to ascertain the particulars rightly would be for me to accompany him when he paid a visit the next day to the cottage of the old man who was the object of my scrutiny. It was so arranged; and with what joy did I retire to my couch that night! for, although I was far from certain that I had gained a knowledge of the true person, there was a prospect of the desired information before me. Previous to this day, I had had no idea of a clue to the mystery which enveloped the fate of John Lawson, but now I had a faint outline of coming success; and that, to a person who has been almost in despair of effecting his purpose, is as cheering as the shadow of a spreading tree in a burning land."

"I wonder, Vincent," said I, interrupting him, "to hear you make such grand comparisons regarding money, which I supposed you would consider as dross, and hardly judge worthy of a sigh or a consideration."

"Pardon me, my dear fellow," he answered: "if I had had a sufficiency of wealth to enable me to live in respectability, and to perform such acts of kindness for my parishioners as I knew that they needed, I should not have bestowed the least attention upon getting more money. But when a man has not even so much as will give him the power to keep in the station in which Providence has placed him, and for which his education qualifies him—and to give to the widow and the stranger the succour he sees that their wants require—then money must be estimable and precious in his sight."

"On the day following, Mr. Delmont came to me very early, and requested me to accompany him without delay, as he had many patients to call on in the course of that morning. We set out, and he conducted me

through many of the narrow streets of that large country town, the mazes of which he threaded with consummate skill, such as could arise solely from very frequent visits to them.

"I remarked to the Doctor how unpleasant it must be to him to go to such low places, but he assured me that he never regarded such matters when he had any hope of doing service to any human creature.

"We went on, and I was beginning to wonder how much farther we had to go, when I perceived a smile come over, and light up the whole of Mr. Delmont's countenance. I was, I must confess, astonished to behold this, for I thought, by the look of his face, that he must recognise some friend in this dismal and depraved neighbourhood. And so, indeed, he had. A friend—but one in the poorest and meanest condition of life. A little girl who was meeting us, and who was very badly dressed, could scarcely restrain her joy at beholding my companion. She stopped when she was at some paces distant from us, and made a very respectful and humble curtsy.

"'Why, I declare,' said Mr. Delmont, 'here is one of the very people we were going to seek; this is lucky. Ah! my good little girl! we were coming to see you, and you have got beforehand with us, and have come to see us.'

"The little girl came nearer and nearer, and looked up at the Doctor with delighted eyes!

"'Is this, then,' I asked, 'the grand-daughter of the old man to whom you were escorting me?'

"'To be sure it is,' he answered. 'Is the old gentleman better to-day?'

"'Oh! yes, Sir, thank you,' she replied; 'his cough is not near so bad, and he will be so glad to see you. I was only come out for a little walk, and I'll turn and go back with you, if you please.'

"'No! no!' said Delmont, 'you had better go on, for you will get roses into your little cheeks, which are too pale now for what I like.'

"'Oh! I would much—much rather go back with you!'

"So saying, she turned and walked in front of us, leading the way to the cottage of her old grandfather, which was a poor and mean abode.

"'You run in first, my love,' said Delmont; 'and he rather kept me back, as Emma Lawson raised the latch, and entered the cottage.'

"'What! back again so soon, Emma! What! can't you leave your old grandfather for half an hour, without wishing to see his grey head again? You will hurt yourself, if you keep so close to the poor fellow who can do no good for any one now.'

"And John Lawson heaved a deep and bitter sigh.

"'Oh! you can do a great—great deal of good for me, grandfather!' answered Emma; and she sprang to her grandfather's side, and fell on her knees before him. The old man bent down over his pet lamb, and impressed such kisses upon her forehead as only real love can bestow.



“ ‘ Here’s your kind friend, grandpapa, come to see you. How very—very good he is——!’ ”

“ Come! come!” cried Mr. Delmont, interrupting Vincent: “ This is a studied story; what’s the use of giving it so fully? Besides, you’re putting in embellishments which never took place.”

“ I do assure you,” said Vincent, turning to me, “ I am saying too little, rather than too much. Let me finish my tale, Delmont, and then you can talk afterwards.”

Mrs. Vincent also urged the propriety of her husband’s remarks, and Mr. Delmont was compelled to submit; simply remarking—“ We must make all due allowances for exaggeration.”

Vincent then resumed:—

“ The old man, hearing these words, ‘ Your kind friend has come to see you,’ looked additionally happy, and began to agree cordially with his little companion’s opinion, when Mr. Delmont said that we had better go in, as the only reason why he had not at once entered was, that he wished the old man, who was very nervous and timid, to be prepared for seeing persons before we intruded upon his privacy. I must confess I fancied that, had the sick man and his child been discoursing on any other matter than that which they had selected for their conversation, we should not just then have crossed the threshold, but have stood yet longer at the portal. However that may be, we certainly went in rather prematurely at last; for the old man was in the middle of a sentence,—full of commendation of Mr. Delmont,—when we found ourselves in the small but neat room where John Lawson dwelt.

“ ‘ Oh ! is that you, Sir ? Bless you ! bless you, Sir ! ’ cried the old man.

“ ‘ It *is* I,’ answered Mr. Delmont ; ‘ how is my good patient to-day ? ’

“ ‘ Oh ! bravely, Sir ! bravely ! I am always better when I see you,—and reason I have to be so, too.’

“ ‘ I have brought a gentleman here to introduce to you ; I am sure you will welcome him, for he is a friend of mine.’

“ ‘ I am very glad, Sir, to see any friend of yours. Here, my love ! hand the gentlemen chairs, and place them by the fireside, for the morning feels cold to me, somehow.’

“ The little child hastened to do so ; and I very soon was comfortably settled, so as at my ease to hear the conversation which might ensue between Mr. Delmont and his humble and grateful patient.

“ ‘ I have not come to-day, John, only for the purpose of seeing how you get on in regard to your health, but to have a little talk with you on another matter. Where did you live before you settled in this town, may I ask you ? ’

“ ‘ Oh dear me ! dear me ! it’s hard for me to say, I’m sure, for my poor mind always fails me when I want to recollect anything, and I’m getting worse than ever now, in that way ; but my dear grandchild may recollect,—I’ll ask her. Where did we come from, my love, when we came here ? ’

“ ‘ From Ulverstone, grandpapa,’ answered the girl in a moment.

“ Mr. Delmont looked at me, and I at him, and we shook our heads in mutual condolence, for that was not the name of the town of which he and I hoped to hear from her lips.

“ ‘ But where,’ said Mr. Delmont, ‘ where did you come from before that again ? Perhaps that will do for me.’

“ The old man considered for some time, shook his head mournfully, and turned again to his grandchild.—

“ ‘ Where did we live before that, love ? ’

“ ‘ I was *born* at Ulverstone, grandpapa.’

“ Mr. Delmont looked still graver, and so did I, for matters seemed to be assuming a gloomier aspect.

“ ‘ But where did *I* come from, love ? for you can tell me, I am sure,’ said the old man, smiling with affection upon his pretty nurse.

“ ‘ From Preston, grandpapa,’ replied the child, without a moment’s hesitation.

“ Preston answered the purpose as little as Ulverstone ; and I almost despaired : but Mr. Delmont persevered, and requested the names of other places Lawson had lived in, but all in vain. The grandchild uttered the names of Hull and Patrington, and various others, but none of them was the right one.

“ ‘ It is no use trying, Sir,’ said I to Mr. Delmont : ‘ I am sure the little girl must have named all the towns her grandfather ever lived at in his life.’

“‘ Oh! no, no, Sir!’ said the old man; ‘ I have dwelt at a great many more than that: wherever I have been I have not got on at all, and so I have always been moving about in the hope that I might do better: it’s my having talked over these trouble to my little darling there, (the joy of my old age,) that has made her know so many of the towns so well, though she has never been in them; but I cannot *now* recollect them.’

“‘ But do you know the name of —?’ and Mr. Delmont mentioned that particular place in which I felt so much interested.

“‘ Oh yes! yes!’ cried the little girl; ‘ I have often heard you talk of that, grandpapa, I know I have.’

“‘ Oh! yes,’ answered the old man; ‘ if I forgot every other name, I should never forget that, for there the happiest days of my life were passed.’

“ I can hardly tell you what I felt at that moment, for I seemed to have certainty within my reach, and to have suddenly gained the goal for which, for so long past, I had been anxiously striving.

“‘ This gentleman, then,’ said Delmont, pointing to me, ‘ has something he wishes to say to you; and as I am very busy to-day, I will go on now, and call in again upon you in the evening. But, before I go, let me show what I have brought for my little friend here.’

“ So saying, he drew out of his pocket a small packet, which he opened, and spread the contents before the grandchild, who could hardly find words to express her joy at the nice presents which Mr. Delmont had brought her. Mr. Delmont then took his leave, followed by the blessings of hearts that he had gladdened by his presence, and by his unaffected and undeviating kindness. Happy those who, when they have paid a visit, have made hearts happy by so doing! and, in fulfilling their ordinary course of duty, have a blessing attending their path, to crown their daily exertions with the best success!

“‘ After all, my friend,’ said I, turning to John Lawson, ‘ you may not be the person whom I seek; for I have understood that with him whom I wish to find there resides a son: now, you seem to have nobody living with you excepting this sweet child, and I am sure she must be everything to you.’

“ The old man heaved such a sigh as made me start from my seat abruptly, and commence a hearty apology for having touched upon a subject which appeared to have moved his whole soul, and plunged him into such bitter grief. He begged me not to mind, as he should soon be himself again, although the remembrance of what I had mentioned was, indeed, very, very sad to him.

“‘ When I lived, Sir, at the place you have mentioned,’ said Lawson, after two or three minutes, ‘ I had only one son, and a dear, good, amiable son he was to me. He was always a-striving to see what he could do to make me more comfortable; but things seemed fated, as I may say, to

be against us. He never could make enough to support us both ; I say both of us, for, although I was not too old then to work, I was in such bad health as almost to unfit me for labour of any sort. The whole of the neighbours used to talk of what a good son John was to me, and the mothers used to say that he would be blessed some day for his goodness to me. And so he is blessed, Sir,' said the old man, abruptly breaking off,—‘but it's in heaven, not on earth. The fact is, Sir, when I lived in the town where it seems you knew something of me by your asking about it, that young man,—my dear lost boy,—was the only means of making my home happy, or getting me a living. But with all his trying to get on, he could not succeed in it, and so at last we left that place and went on to another. There he took him a wife, a nice tidy girl, and our home would have indeed been a happy one could he have found work ; but the same ill luck followed us, and after months of trial we gave it up and went to a town many miles distant. There the wife of his bosom, whom he had loved from the first hour he had seen her, died in giving birth to the dear child who has been such a blessing to me, and whom you now see by my side. From that hour my poor boy drooped more than ever ; he had always been in a sickly state of health, but now he looked as if he would soon follow his wife to the grave. Work was as bad in this town as the other, and even worse for *us*, for his health made him unable to do the work when he could get it now and then. At that town he died—and left me only one treasure in the world ; but so long as I have her, I am not poor, though I may want money or other wealth of any sort. Come nearer to me, love, and let me *feel* that I have got you yet, for other treasures which I thought as secure have taken themselves wings and flown away to heaven.’

“The little girl took her grandfather's band, and looked up in his face with eyes full of deep and constant love. I now addressed the old man, and told him I should be sorry to be thought ready to come there to stir up old recollections in his mind, and call back past scenes of care to his remembrance, without having a good reason for so doing. I then entered into a short account of the object of my visit, and asked him if he recollected a circumstance which intimately concerned the question which was then at issue between another party and myself, respecting a considerable sum of money, which question it would be idle and unnecessary for me to enter into on this occasion, as it is of no interest to any person except myself, and those who look to me for board and lodging.

“At the first mention of the fact to which I allude, the eyes of the old man brightened up in a manner I little dared to hope for, and I saw immediately that his memory was perfectly fresh upon this subject—the precious subject of my active and unwearied search. How delightful was this sight to me ! I had been led to fear, from the look of vacuity on the man's countenance when I asked him what places he had lived at, and

indeed from his whole previous demeanour, that the circumstance which so greatly interested me would altogether have escaped his remembrance, as it had little connexion with his own life, or with the prosperity and welfare of himself and those he loved. I was surprised, therefore, fully as much as delighted.

“ ‘ I recollect it all, Sir ; I could witness to all the facts that you speak of before a hundred courts,’ said he, with the greatest calmness and precision. ‘ Whenever you want me to witness to it, I will be ready to do it.’

“ And the old man went over all the circumstances as well as if they had occurred to himself only the day before ; or, perhaps, even better, for the old very frequently, as people know, remember what took place years before, more correctly and rightly than they do an occurrence of a few hours previous. I felt quite sure that I might adduce him as evidence upon the matter that I had at heart, and that any judge would be convinced of the truth of what he affirmed, and the justice of my claim to that to which his testimony was necessary.

“ ‘ My friend,’ cried I, in a rapture, ‘ you will be invaluable to me, for you will be able to prove a most interesting point, which will be the means of gaining me some money that has been unjustly kept from me, and which, but for your testimony, I should never have been able to recover.’

“ Thereupon the old man began to express his pleasure at being the means of assisting me in my rightful purpose.’

“ ‘ But how came it, my good friend,’ inquired I (for my *curiosity* was now excited—my important business being concluded), ‘ that, whilst you have forgotten the names of places where you resided, you recollect so well a matter very unimportant to yourself, and trivial in its own character to all, excepting myself and one other person ? Can you tell me how this comes to pass ? for I am very anxious to know.’

“ ‘ It was in this way, Sir ;—when that thing took place, which I have got quite fresh in my mind now, it was of no concern to me at all, and by a week after I should have forgotten all about it ; but, Sir, my dear boy who is dead made a remark about it, and it is from that remark it has never escaped me. Let them examine me, Sir, about anything which my son said only a sentence about, and I will speak of it as clear as the day it happened. Nobody knows, till they lose one of those they really and truly love, how every word that that one ever said is treasured up and thought over. Things which concerned *themselves* may occur much later, and may escape their recollection ; but the words of the one they loved, although they were about a very common affair, are never—never forgotten.’

“ ‘ It was a happy event for me, Lawson, that Mr. Delmont met me here, or I might have come to this town in search of you, and had all my trouble for nothing : in such a large place as this a man may utterly escape from the knowledge of another living all his life a few streets from him ; and much less, when a stranger comes, is he likely to find a person of whom

he is in quest. Much more unlikely, again, is it, if the object of his pursuit be in a humble station of life, that he will find him. It was a happy thing for me that I was led to spend an evening at the house where I met Mr. Delmont, for, had it not been for that worthy gentleman, I should never have seen you.'

" 'You may well say, Sir,' cried the old man with energy, 'that, had it not been for that worthy gentleman, you would never have seen me; for that certainly you never would.'

" 'Do you think, then, so highly of his skill? for I presume that to be the case by the emphatic way in which you speak.'

" 'I do think, Sir, highly—most highly—of the ability of the Doctor, and I have every reason to do so, for he has kept away the disease which was injuring my constitution so much when I came to this town first: but that was not what I meant; it was of his kindness, and not of his skill, that I was speaking, when I said that you would never have seen me but for him. My little grand-daughter there can say the same as I can.'

" 'Oh yes, Sir! yes, Sir!' she answered, jumping up; 'I can indeed. We should both have died without him. Oh! he is so very, very kind and good!' And at the bare remembrance of the Doctor, her eyes filled with tears of love and gratitude.

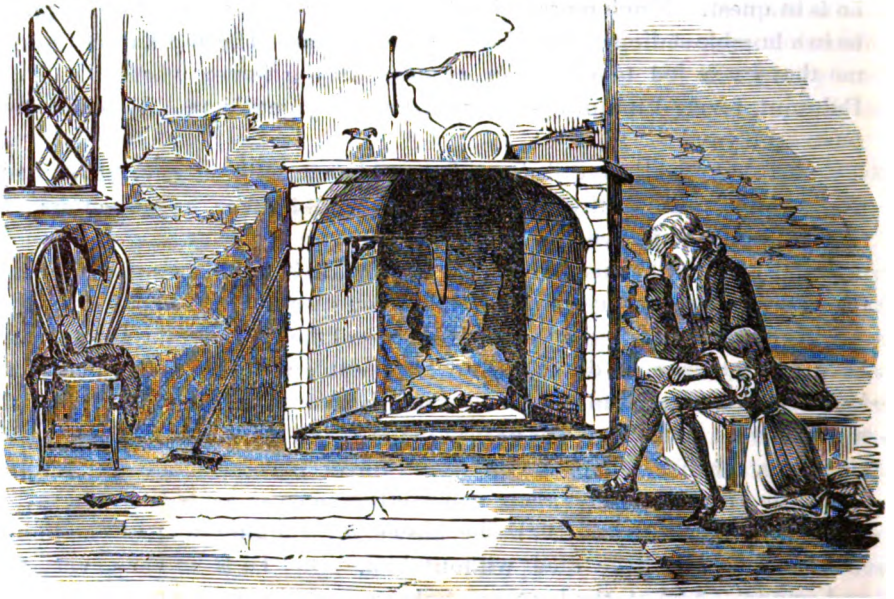
" 'Will you tell me, then, about your acquaintance with the Doctor?'

" 'You know, Sir, for I have told you, how much I had to move about from one place to another. When my son died, he left me old and feeble, hardly able to do anything whatever for my support. I tried to get a living in one place, and failed; then in another, and failed there again; then in a third, and it was just the same again; always the same ill luck. At last we came here, and here it was worse even than at any of the others. We, —that is, my grandchild and me,—thought we must starve, and we were almost beginning to despair.

" 'When we had been here some weeks, and had found that I could get no employ at all, and the landlord was pressing for the rent, and the baker was pressing for his money for his bread, I was forced to ask my grand-daughter to go about and seek for some one to give us help; and she did go to many, but unluckily she did not get anybody to assist us. Some told her that they had too many poor in their own neighbourhood (for these large towns have as many districts as they have streets, almost), and that, for that reason, they could not help her. Others told her that they knew nothing of her, and that so they could not help her; her story, they said, might be, and most likely was, right enough, but that she was a perfect stranger to them. She could not find one of the gentlemen she applied to who would help her.

" 'But one night when we were sitting in a state of the deepest grief and trouble, we heard a soft tap at the door, and we wondered who it could be. My little grand-daughter trembled as she went to open it, fearing it was

Z



some one come to threaten us, if I did not pay the money which was due to him ; but I bade her cheer up, as I was sure that the knock was too soft a one to come from one of those to whom I was in debt. The child opened the door, and a gentleman of most pleasing looks stood before her. That gentleman, Sir, as you will suppose from what I have said before, was Mr. Delmont. He asked her whether he might be allowed to come in, and the child was overjoyed, Sir, you may be sure, to let him ; for she knew, from his face, that he had come as an angel of mercy to us in our wretched state. He came in, Sir, and he told me how he had found, from having lived a long time in this town, and having acted as a doctor there for all these years, that there was a great deal of distress there which did not meet the public eye—that many people who had been of a most respectable rank in life, would almost starve rather than go about to ask for alms ; and that, even when they did go, the gentry were afraid to trust to their stories, as the impostors were so many in the town as to make honest people doubted—that for these reasons he had, long before, made up his mind to divide the town, to himself, into districts, Sir, as he called them, and to go and call at all the poor houses, to find out whether there were not those pining away with grief and misery who had never happened to apply to him for help. In this way, Sir, he had now come to us, and it seemed to us as if Heaven had looked upon us in pity, and sent to aid us when everything seemed to be at the worst.

“ ‘ He was not one, Sir, of those who give to the beggar just because he asks them—but he was one of those, Sir, who go to search and seek out for

misery, in order that they may cause it to cease. How many a widow's heart he has thus made glad I have since heard, and how many an orphan he has placed in the road to respectability and well-doing. From that hour, Sir, Mr. Delmont has, in one manner or other, been the means of supporting me and my grand-daughter; by getting for me such jobs as I have strength to do; by calling the notice of other kind-hearted persons to me; and by his own gifts. Had it not been for Mr. Delmont, Sir, I should not have been alive this day to speak with you.'

" 'I shall always, then,' said I, 'consider that I am greatly indebted to Mr. Delmont, for he has been the means of preserving for me a most important witness, whom otherwise I should have lost. Gentlemen such as he, not only benefit the individual towards whom their judicious and active charity is exercised, but also all those (how numerous, perhaps, he little suspects) who are aided in some indirect manner through him. May I ask you if Mr. Delmont is the parish-doctor?—as I presume that he may be, and that, consequently, from his particular line of duty, his attention has been called to the *poor* of the town.'

" 'Oh no, Sir,' said Lawson, 'he is not the parish-doctor; it is his own goodness of heart which makes him give up all his spare time, and all the money he can afford, to the poor and wretched.'

" 'I suppose you now know Mr. Delmont very intimately?' I inquired, 'since he loves to come and visit the poor so kindly at their own houses.'

" 'Oh! I know him very well indeed, Sir! He comes and sits with me for a long time together, and he treats me, now, quite like a friend: he often tells me about his former life, and how much he wished, when he was a very young man, that he might get to be a great man in his own line, and that his fame might be known all about. But now, Sir, he finds his happiness in going to the poorest, meanest place, so long as he can do good. His fame, Sir, I often tell him, is much surer this way than it could be any other; for, when this world has passed away, his deeds will be remembered, and even now they are rejoiced over by the angels in heaven.'

" 'And so now,' said Vincent, 'I have finished my tale of the Doctor. You have before you *two* living witnesses to its truth, if *both* would speak. I am sure, however, that *one* will not on such a subject. How can I forbear, however, to testify my gratitude for the personal favour Mr. Delmont has conferred upon me, in his active and zealous charity? Without him I should have been many hundred pounds poorer than I now am, and such a sum is no inconsiderable matter to a country clergyman. I do hope, my friend, that, if you write about the medical profession, you will allow that there are some amongst that body who are deserving of praise of the highest kind from every sensible and honest man.'

" 'I can assure you, Vincent,' I answered, 'that I will do every justice my poor and humble pen can render to the medical profession. That there

are some amongst them who neglect the poor, even when it is their peculiar duty to attend to them, is a painful truth; that there are others who, whether gratified or disappointed in their ambitious hopes, can find the highest and noblest joy in ministering to the distressed and miserable is a truth equally certain, and a most delightful one.

"Will you allow me, without deeming me impertinent, to express to you, Mr. Delmont, the great pleasure which the tale Vincent has narrated has given me? I shall always remember it; and you must not blame me if hereafter you should see a record of it in print, for such records sometimes act as stimulants to others to follow such examples."

"My dear Sir," answered Delmont, "you are welcome to put this tale into print if you think right: only place in your title-page, 'With embellishments by the Reverend Mr. Vincent;' for you must allow that a friend is hardly the best person to narrate a story of another which is to pass as matter of fact.

"It is easy for a gentleman, you know, to conjure up ideas of what is great and good, and then clothe in them the image of his own private and firm ally."

"I give you my word," said Vincent, "that everything I have spoken is perfectly and literally true, and that it is only the modesty which enhances the excellence of his other qualities, which leads him to deny the correctness of the story I have now detailed to you."

"In sober truth," said Delmont, "I must confess that in the best of our large towns there is enough to chill the heart of any one even to witness. I received my education—I mean my professional education—in a school, certainly none of the best for philanthropy and fine feeling, and yet, after all, when I left it as a very young man, I could not fail to sympathise with the miserable around me."

"May I ask," I inquired, "to what particular school you allude?"

"I spoke," he replied, "of a London hospital, and I did not mean the remark to apply to one more than to another of the London hospitals. Is it not a lamentable state of things, that the greatest (what name shall I say, to use a polite term?) the greatest slang-men about town are found to be those who should be devoting every energy of their mind, and thought of their heart, to the fitting themselves for acting as the instruments for preserving and blessing a whole community?"

"Who could think for a moment, were he previously a stranger to our mighty metropolis, that the young men he met, with hats on one side, red belcher handkerchiefs round their necks, cigars in their mouths, and clubs in their hands, were the very persons in training to have the health and life of a nation intrusted to their charge? Who would suppose that he who was ever to be found in the Saloon, the oyster-shop, or the gin-palace, with the oath on his tongue, and the ribald jest to accompany it, was he who, nominally, was engaged in investigating the most difficult piece of

mechanism in the whole world—a subject so wonderful that the mind of the highest mortal cannot compass and understand it. Let Guy's and St. Thomas's—let the London and St. George's—with many others, testify to the truth of this description."

"But perhaps, Mr. Delmont," said I, interrupting him, "this kind of life, although it may not render them the most learned doctors in the universe, may not make them callous and unfeeling."

"My dear Sir," he answered, "have you ever happened, when in London, to spend an evening in the company of a medical student? If you have, I think you have not failed to hear the heartless manner with which the operations performed upon patients that very morning have been spoken of,—the witticisms on 'subjects'—that is, upon the bodies of the dead—over whom a kind of solemn dignity seems to be thrown by the hand alike of Reason and Revelation.

"These bodies are made the themes of brutal jeers, these cold and stiffened forms, about which the tears of hapless widows, of parents, sisters, or friends, are falling bitterly in some cheerless hovel!

"Yet, after I left the society of young men of this class, and settled in a *large country town*, I could not help—deadened as my sensitive feelings had then become—I could not help, I say, pitying the poor who lived in hundreds in narrow courts and unhealthy alleys. Perhaps this feeling was heightened by my having come immediately from a quiet country-village, where the poor, however they may want the other necessities of life, have at least the fresh free air, and the joyous brightening sun! In the town they are deprived of the breezes and the sunshine, which the rural dwelling-place affords; and yet they are debarred from the pleasures which are to be found in towns by those whose station and means enable them to mix with other men, and find the satisfaction of social intercourse."

"Was it," asked Vincent, "a *very large town*, then, that you first started in, after you passed your examination?"

"Very large indeed: I had, as you may suppose, a scarcity of practice at the beginning; and in the evening-time, (rather solitary and wretched myself,) I used to like to wander out into all the small streets and lanes of the city. What a change did these evening rambles bring before my view! From a street where equipages lined the way, and rows of bedizened footmen lined the road,—where houses were lighted up with chandeliers, and from which sounds of music and mirth ever reached the ear,—I would pass to the alley where no one was to be seen excepting the starved and unhappy creature who was crouching against the doorway of a hovel which was too wretched to deserve an occupant. A flickering rushlight, perhaps, might be discovered in a garret window, where the mother sat to watch her child die, without one comfort to soothe its dying bed, or friend,—save her,—to minister to it in its griefs. No sounds were to be heard excepting the bitter groan of him who beheld his family around him in want of the

bread he had no money to procure, or the low sad sigh of the tender woman who was sinking beneath the weight of sorrows which her destiny appeared to have imposed upon her. Mirth and Melancholy ever have their dwelling-places near to each other: Laughter and Loneliness are close neighbours, even in their own homes: but never, I believe, do the happy and the heartbroken, the gay and the grieving, reside so near to each other as in the *great towns* of our land."

"I cannot help thinking, however," said Vincent, "that many times we fancy people to be very miserable, and much to be pitied, because they reside in small houses, and in narrow rooms, who are by no means to be sympathised with on that account; for they do not feel that to be an evil to which they have always been accustomed, and which is possibly suited to their state and condition."

"I am entirely of your opinion," answered Mr. Delmont; "and I can truly say that those I most sorrow for amongst the lower orders are not those who live in little hovels, and sleep in minute closets; but, on the contrary, those whom I have found in large—very large buildings. These latter are much more pitiable in my judgment than the former."

"What description of houses," I asked eagerly "were those large ones of which Mr. Delmont spoke?" And he asked if I had never taken cognizance of large ruinous-looking buildings, many stories high, with broken windows and dilapidated roofs. "Dull and dismal edifices which seem to stand out without an horizon—as if there were no meeting of heaven at all with such earthly misery! These houses have formerly, perhaps, been the residences of great men, but have now been deserted by their former description of occupants, and have become the property of some persons who, for a very small rent, are allowed to hold them, and let them out in rooms for whole families to herd in together. A whole race of people live in houses fit only for the bat and the owl. And some of these large buildings have been manufactories, where many hundreds of hands were kept constantly employed, and, by consequence, numerous men, women, and children maintained; but, by reason of some unfortunate speculation which turned out a failure, the proprietor has been ruined, and all the families who had a means of support are thrown out of work, and deprived of their humble homes. Then, when the manufactory has fallen to decay, and the glass is gone from the windows, and the slates from the roof,—when the cold wind whistles through the long bare rooms, and the rain patters upon the opening boards,—then does the manufactory become the home of those who once used therein the strength and the energy of their youth and manhood."

"I am quite of opinion," remarked Vincent, "that the people most to be pitied for their poverty are those who have formerly moved in a station of respectability. I call all *respectable* who have earned their bread by honest industry, and maintained their families by manly exertion."

"I should think," answered Delmont, "that amongst sensible men there could scarcely be two opinions on that matter. Those who from their cradle have led a pauper-life, and have begged for charity from the passers-by in every thoroughfare, although they may suffer much from hunger and cold, do not feel the moral degradation which is the bitterest part of all necessity. But how wretched is the fate of those who, in their grief, call to mind the hours when they were in circumstances, at any rate, easy, and could come home each evening to a home made comfortable by their own efforts! Have you ever in your walks," continued he, "seen a miserable-looking creature seated by the side of the road, or reclining upon the grass in a field, reading attentively some weekly newspaper? Have you noticed with what eagerness he devours its contents, and broods over the remarks which the journal contains? I have often sighed as I thought that that man might, probably, be one who had been, in earlier life, an honest artisan, or respectable manufacturer; who, in his misery and his recklessness, has bought at a large price the journal which tells him he is starving. I call it a large price, for perhaps the sixpence he so expended was the last one which remained in a pocket previously almost despoiled; and if so, it was a larger amount to him than thousands of pounds are to some other men."

"I have often in my walks met with people such as those you were speaking of; and I have been extremely distressed to find, when I addressed them as I would those who were cravers for charity,—what are commonly called street-beggars,—how they grieved at being so accosted. The speech, which I have uttered with every feeling of benevolence towards them, has shocked their sensibility, and completely sickened them, and made them additionally sad. The sentence which I have spoken, to the effect that it would be a good thing for them if they could get employ in some honest way, and the picture which I have drawn of the comforts which attend upon a life so engaged, have seemed to break the chord of their hearts, and ruin its little remaining melody. Fancy to yourselves that you,—any of you,—had cast a stone towards your favourite dog,—the chosen companion of your country rambles, and the treasured gift of some friend far absent from you and from the land which gave him birth,—and that you had so cast the stone in the hope that your dumb pet would joyfully wag his curly tail, brighten up his fine dark eyes, and rush with his accustomed swiftness in pursuit of the prize which you had in friendship and kindness thrown for him, and then that he would bear it back to you, rejoicing and springing in the air; ever and anon placing the stone upon the ground, and stopping to bark out his happiness in having secured for you the treasure with which you had lately parted. And after you have fancied this, then imagine that whilst you were meaning so kindly by your valued dog,—(valued for many reasons independent of the one which was chief of all,—you have unintentionally, but certainly, dealt your com-

panion a deadly blow, and that his once shining eyes, which had ever been wont to get brighter as you approached, were becoming as the stone which your hand had cast; although still, in his mutilated and maimed condition, he would fain seek to bring you the weapon of his own destruction, as if to prove to you that he was assured you had not for an instant intended to harm him, and that he perfectly knew your meaning in throwing the stone; and fancy that you beheld him die at your very feet.

"Picture again to yourself—any one of you—that you had seen some very beautiful insect resting upon a leaf or flower, and that, struck with its lovely colours, you had taken it up, in order that you might inspect it minutely and carefully, and pay the homage of respect to the wonderful Hand which had so gloriously and marvellously adorned it;—more especially that you had desired to survey the lacelike texture of its aerial wings, which, delicate and frail as they looked, had yet the power to bear it whithersoever its varying and fairy-like mind might lead it. And picture also to yourself that you were anxious, after such a survey, to return it to the place whence you had taken it, and let it go on again in its flight, to delight the eyes of others. And then go on to imagine that, when you replaced the insect on the leaf on which it before had revelled in its gaiety, you found you had, by the pressure of your fingers, for ever deprived it of its power of soaring aloft into mid-air, or of travelling even at the comparatively dismal pace at which your feet could carry you to look upon the wide creation, with its innumerable beauties around! The butterfly you envied for its capability of reaching distant places with speed as swift as thought, and of roaming from flower to flower, just as its inclinations prompted, you have reduced from being in this matter so unearthly, to be a lifeless creature, about to wither into the dust it sprang from.

"Fancy to yourself once more (if you can allow yourself to go on fancying) that you had entered into a lively and pleasing conversation with some friend with whom in earlier years you had passed many days of social and delightful intercourse. Think that you had begun to talk over all the days which you had spent in mutual and gratifying intercourse; that, with the desire strong upon your mind to make yourself as agreeable to your friend as you had happily been enabled to be when you were children together, (sporting beneath the shade of the widely-spreading elm,) you had recalled to his memory scenes the remembrance of which had partially faded from his recollection, in consequence of the many occurrences in which he had in one way or another been concerned in active life. And then imagine that, whilst you were intending nothing but what was amiable and good, some word you had accidentally mentioned in mere sportiveness had entered deeply into the heart of your companion; and that, whilst you trusted to behold the smile beaming over his countenance, his whole spirit and vivacity had fallen, completely conquered and subdued; and that he was shedding the tears of bitter anguish over delights

which forever had perished. The word you uttered, which told you only the name of a field or a house, told him who heard it of the scene where he last parted from one he dearly loved, or of the residence in which one he was deeply attached to breathed his last. When you have realized these ideas, you will then conceive that which I have experienced at the moments to which I have before alluded. I have spoken to persons of the blessing which attends honest industry and respectability of conduct, and they have received the intended kindness with such a pained and bitter look upon their faces, as if Sorrow herself had addressed them, and waited for their answer. I have felt myself a very criminal in even unintentionally doing an unkindness which gifts of mine could not wipe away or obliterate. I had recalled fresh to their memory days of happiness which had passed away from them without any fault on their part; and I had, moreover, appeared to doubt that readiness to labour, which sad experience had proved them to possess in vain. Who can attempt to say what is the extent of pain one word is able to inflict upon a sensitive mind?

"We are too apt to forget this, but in such cases I always feel that there is a potent reason which makes me ever the debtor of persons to whom I have thus spoken. I have not the ability to bestow on them one moment of future time, and yet I have given to them—for I have called vividly back—months, or perhaps years, of disappointment and loss, and, consequently, of sorrow and of suffering. It is, I think, not enough considered that we have the power, every one of us, to make others unhappy, while none of us have the certainty of being able to make any one individual happy. I mean, that an unkindness, a cold speech, or a heartless jest, have the sure effect of grieving and saddening a heart; for who can resist such things? But if we were to load a person with riches, or honours, or applause, yet, from his peculiar bent of mind, it might fail even to please him."

"I am entirely of your way of thinking, Delmont," cried Vincent; "and yet, how continually do men give pain and uneasiness without one pang to themselves for their cruelty!

"Most especially have I noticed this in regard to little children. There is by many men no respect whatever paid to their feelings; in fact, the bare idea of their having feelings is laughed at and derided.

"Have you ever remarked (I am sure you must) how gentlemen speak to beggar girls or boys in the streets—the way in which they order them to get out of their path? while the laugh which follows the tears of children is a matter of every-day occurrence. Doubtless, they forget the annoyances which befall them as soon as they are over, but yet they are for a time annoyed; and who has any right to grieve another unnecessarily, though that grief last but for one second, and be forgotten the next?"

"I should, in the company of many people," interrupted I, "be afraid of

being set down as too vehement a champion of children ; but here, at least, I may hazard some remarks upon a subject so very interesting to me :— A child is, as you all know very well, often sent out by its parents upon some mission which it is ordered to fulfil within a certain period of time ; and, through some misfortune, the child loses its way, and knows not how to return to its home again. Terror and dismay trouble its little heart—it fears that many evils will come to it, which the foolish rhymes, taught to it in infancy, have put into its mind ; and it dreads also the angry parents, who, unconscious of the real cause of its protracted absence from home, will chide it for negligence or idleness.

“ It stands at the corner of some street, lost in dismal fancies, ready to exclaim, in the words of the great poet,

‘ Me miserable ! which way shall I fly ?’

It asks the way with the tear on its cheek, and in faltering accents,— and what does it receive ? A laugh, possibly, at the simplicity of the interrogator. It inquires, probably, where Mr. Brown or Mr. Smith lives—the Mr. Brown or Mr. Smith of its search and anxious care ;—and the person so asked knows that there are some hundreds of Messrs. Smith and Brown in the large towns of this kingdom ; and so he laughs at the tender one for its ignorance of the world : but I conceive that those who laugh at children for their simplicity have much more abundant cause to weep for their shallow wisdom, which can show itself in nothing better than deriding the young for not knowing the things which they have never learned : and for their own fancied superiority, which does not evidence itself in practising the gentleness that children display.

“ However busy I may be when I am thus accosted by a child, I cannot but pause in a moment (although I may be deeply occupied with my own errand), and turn to the inquirer to give a prompt, and, if possible, a satisfactory reply. It has always appeared to me that the clear voice of a little child, sounds like the silvery trumpet of the archangel summoning every one to answer, and to answer the perfect and the true. An unkindness of any description—a cruelty, a harshness, to these tiny creatures—has always seemed to me not only wicked, but extremely foolish ; it is sinning with the sight of heaven before us—‘ for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.’ And they have every claim upon our good and affectionate conduct to them, for they are made to be one of the chief blessings to man in his journey through the world. But far worse than the laugh which pierces the child for the moment, is the joke, oft practised, and yet apparently ever new, of again delaying and, indeed, endangering the poor little inquirer, by giving it a wrong direction, and thus sending it to wander from street to street, and from alley to alley, detaining it yet longer from its mother’s roof, from which already it has too long been absent. Vain and cruel amusement, if it deserve the name of amusement at all ! Yet,

courage, little one! for well I know that, however long thou wanderest in thine innocence, the Angel of the Lord tarrieth round about thee!

"This jest of wrong directions is not confined to the vulgar and the low, but is practised by gentlemen, though they would not perhaps like it to be known amongst their friends that they had made the annoyance of those they ought to have aided the subject of their foolish mirth."

"I really like," said Mr. Delmont, the way that you advocate the cause of the poor,—though I am free to confess that many whom I know would call it Quixotic; nevertheless, those who wish to do what they believe to be right must expect to be spoken against."

"He is a wretched creature, my dear Sir," I answered him, "who is deterred from acting up to what he considers to be his duty, because people either blame him or jest upon him. For myself, the laugh of the man I do not respect, and his sarcasm aimed against me, fall as powerless as the arrow which has dropped from the bow with its work altogether unfulfilled.—

"No, 'tis not ignominious to be wrong'd."

The man does *no good* in truth who only does what is approved of by others and is easy to himself;—for the depraved and the wicked do the same as he."

"I suppose," said Delmont, "we shall hear of your making some great alterations in the condition of the poor, and placing them quite on a different footing to that on which they have been accustomed to stand, since you take up their cause so warmly, and are ready to pursue your way through censure as well as through praise."

"Alas! my good friend," I answered, "I have not the means to do as I would wish, and as my mind would prompt me to do. I have no influence and no money; and I fear that intentions, without these assistants to advance them, will do but little."

"But let us suppose for a moment," said Delmont, "that you had the wealth and the rank which you lack now: what would you do—pray tell me."

"I am ready to do so, if you have the patience to listen to it; so come, my good friends here assembled, compose yourselves to listen patiently to my visionary projects and plans, which I shall have much pleasure in submitting to you; and in order to make them in a complete and respectable form, allow me to designate them as

VISIONARY SCHEMES.

Having given my now commencing details *such a heading*, you will not be surprised to hear any of the fanciful ideas and improbable things which I may place before you. If I were a rich man, if I were a married man, and if I had a seat in the country, I would not make my dwelling-place in London, amidst the crowded streets, and the noise of carriages on Mac-

adamised roads, and consent to constant deprivation of all the beauties of hill, dale, and field, which rural scenery presents.

"O, had I but the envied power to choose
My home, no sound of city bell should reach
My ear!"

"I would have post-horses put into my travelling chariot, (for I think a rich man ought not to travel by railroad,—there is something so business-like about it,) and hasten down to my romantic park. On my arrival there I would hold a kind of levee for the poor people of the neighbourhood."

At these words Vincent began to laugh heartily, and inquired whether I would require them to come with bags and swords.

"Not at all," said I; "nevertheless, it should be a kind of levee. Yet no man should doubt his permission to come, or need another to introduce him; for I would send an invitation round to them by my little child, (were I so blessed as to be a father,) because they would give him no other thanks, and make him no other return, than a blessing. Such, as you are aware, is the custom of the poor to such little ones when they come to confer upon them any favour, as messages from kind-hearted parents.

"When they arrived at the park, I would have every precaution taken to prevent the feelings of my poor friends being in any manner hurt. I would have the gates at my park (the large gates, which, you know, are placed at the further end of the long carriage-drives which lead up to country mansions) on this occasion put wide open, so that the poor might get up to the house-door without the consciousness of how grand and long a carriage-drive they had to pass over; showing the immense difference between another man's circumstances and their own, and also proving to them how great a distance the house is actually removed from them, the poor:—and how the windings and turnings in the grounds might tend to hide from the owners of the house the sight of the distressed,—from those whose eyes are the only ones for ever directed towards it. You must have seen, in your visits to the high-roads in the country, how frequent a thing it is to have a large dog chained outside the house, so that in seeking that house you have to pass him, as he glares at you with his fiery eyes, and endeavours to break asunder the chain which keeps him in. I would have my Carlo or Lion moved away, that it might not show its instinct by barking at the poor. These dogs are usually judged of as almost reasoning animals; certain it is that they often show much dislike and anger at the sight of a creature in distress. I would have my dog taken away, that he might not, in mockery, be showing them that he had teeth for the purpose of eating with, and that, if he bit them not when he could, he was only restrained by finding, with disappointment, that when he got to their hand he must turn away again because it had no flesh upon it. The dog should

sleep in the stable, that the wretched might enter without annoyance or inconvenience.

“Above all things, I would have no officious pompous steward, with bright shoe-buckles and powdered hair, to do the honours to them, and explain to them what was their proper line of conduct. I would not authorise such a person to say to them—‘You may sit down now;’ ‘You may come near to the fire;’ ‘You may put down your hats’—marking out to them thus, that, were it not an unusual and peculiar kindness intended to them, they would have to stand, although their bones might ache with honest and industrious labour; that they would have to look upon the fire with anxious eyes, without being warmed by it; and that their hats must have remained in their *hands*, to mark plainly that they stood bareheaded before their superior. I would not have men of any sort, although they had not a farthing in the whole world that they could call their own, asked to my house, to make them feel themselves below him by whom they had been invited.

“I should, then, as they arrived at the mansion, station myself at the window to see them coming up the carriage-drive. I can fancy now, that I see them thus advancing. Poor things! how slowly they come along! How jaded they look! like unto the parties in a funeral procession—one of those funeral processions in which the attendants seem, if I may so express myself, to walk with the dead man to the grave, brothers of his in all that is sad and melancholy.

“Talking of the poor, if you notice them attentively you will see that, when they walk together, they never keep side by side, but that one is always a little in advance of the other. This want of unity is one of the most unhappy characteristics of the poor. You may laugh at me for speaking of so trifling a matter as the way in which men walk together; yet it is by such minute points that the condition of a class of people can be correctly ascertained. I fancy I hear them coughing as they come up the carriage-drive—for Poverty hath its continual and fixed cough, as if Nature herself pointed out a revolt to the piercing wind and the dry morsel, to the sharp reproach and the heartless joke. Oh! it is a melancholy thing to hear that continual cough!—to follow down the streets and lanes of our large and wealthy cities, some of the hapless objects of our compassion and sympathy; and to be able to trace them, even if they become lost to our sight, by the cough which attends each step of their progress! But now I fancy that my visitors have arrived at the house, and that they are shut up, for a time, in the room where they are to wait for an audience with me. I hear that quiet low tone of speaking which the poor are in the habit of using when they know that the rich are in their vicinity, and may hear them. Their accents are very, very low, as if they thought that the rich man’s anger might be awakened if he only heard the voice of the poor man; though the subject of his discourse might be as good and correct as

possible ; and that the wealthy person could only be at ease when he was completely quiet and undisturbed.

" I hear, too, that low shuffling movement in the room where they are assembled, as if they felt poverty to be a dense and insufferable weight, and as if they were trying to move it from themselves by pushing about the room. Alas! alas! there is no getting rid of such a clog as that; it hangs to a chain about the neck which weighs down a man; it forces him to whom it is attached to bow before those of his own flesh and blood—with whom he himself is equal, perhaps, in all points, excepting that of the possession of a little dross which too often tarnishes and corrupts the owner.

" I wonder what they are doing all the time that the low sound is going on in this manner. Perhaps, and most likely, they are looking at the various pictures which are placed round the room; and if they see any lovely landscapes, such as amateurs desire to have, with bending trees and glassy water, they are saying to themselves as they gaze—'Those are like the loved spots where we have so often paused, in order that we might weep; and that is the still brook by which we have rested with that bitterness in our hearts that would not pass away!' Alas! when the triumphs of Art but tend to the misery of Nature; and when each picture that reminds of tree, of valley, or of hill, reminds also of the tear that falls, and will not be checked, and of the sigh which rises, and will not be subdued! But now I fancy that I determine to open the door, and visit the company who are waiting to see me. I open the door, and the eyes of them all are immediately upon me, with a fixed and intent look—with eyes that looked as if they had been gazing upon me for days and nights. Here is another trait to be remarked in the poor, by those who make a study of them, and do not turn away from them directly they are seen, merely because they are humble and in want. How they look at the rich! They look as if they would read one's inmost soul; their countenances are 'more of sorrow than of anger.' The appearance is, as if the person who is the object of their present attention had occupied their entire and earnest thoughts for many days and nights. Ay! those eyes are the very same eyes ever *before me*, in fancy, whilst lavishing my money upon idle follies and valueless gewgaws, placing me, as it were, in the centre of an amphitheatre of poverty-fixed sorrowing eyes. How impossible it is for a man, who thinks at any period of his daily life (and there are very few who do not do so at some period or other), to shake off from himself the consciousness that he is not acting up to the duties which Providence requires of him! The 'still small voice' of conscience will make itself heard amidst the din of arms and the tumult of a camp! and it will make itself equally audible in the shop where baubles are displayed for the voluptuary and the spendthrift, and in the crowded ball-room, even when the musicians are playing, and the company are threading the mazes of the dance.

" The first person whom I notice in the room where my levee takes place

is one of those tottering old men that I always feel inclined to stand near to, fearing they will, from very weakness and decrepitude, fall down ; Nature thus wisely bidding us to stand before the hoary head, even though it should be placed upon the shoulders of a workhouse pauper !

“ Very venerable is old age ; I feel that it deserves every mark of respect that can possibly be shown to it. There is, as it should be borne in mind, much more difference betwixt eighty years and twenty years, than betwixt a monarch’s throne and the meanest station ; the one has had the benefit of experience, which wealth and rank cannot purchase ; and the commands of Heaven to honour old age are as universal as age itself, and are limited to no particular sphere or class of mankind.

“ The old man who first attracts my notice is dressed in a very old smock-frock, as if to point out, from its very age, that his life had been a very long one, and that even now it bore all the symbols, as well as the realities, of what it had ever been—a life of work and of labour. He has not been able to lay by a competency, and retire as soon as he had done so, with the certainty that for the future he need only know toil by the remembrance of it ; but he has been forced, up to eighty years of age, to do the work which only befits a young and hearty man.

“ It is a painful sight to see that an old person is forced to go on in his cares and his sorrows, at a time when nothing but affectionate kindness of children and grandchildren, and other friends, should be his happy and constant portion.

“ How many labour till Death first says them Nay !

“ His arm is placed behind his bent back, with all the appearance of that arm not being any assistance or support to the back, but rather being an additional burthen to what is already wearied and worn. Certainly a pitiable object is this old man, take him in what point of view you may. Friends appear to have forsaken him, or to have passed away from him, in the course of his protracted and unhappy existence. Money he has none, to keep himself in a respectable condition of life, and provide himself with the food that is requisite for so old a person, and with clothing to shelter him from the cold. To see him is sufficient to make one pity him, and to pity him is enough to make one wish to minister to his necessities, and to make him feel no longer so acutely the absence, which he is forced to experience, of friends, and home, and comforts.

“ I begin now (filled with sympathy) to ask the poor old man of what he most stands in need, and what would be a comfort to him ; but he begins, immediately on my so doing, to tell me, with a smile of half vacancy, of, ‘ when old Squire Jones was alive ;’ and of ‘ how the field at the top of the long lane used to be open then to everybody to pass through ;’ and of ‘ how the young Squire, when he came from college, or some fine place (but he thought that was the name they gave it), used to go out hunting from morning till night—that he did ;’ and of ‘ how Madam Jones was

very fond of getting the wild flowers from the hedges, just as if she was as pleased with them as the poor gipsy children who used to come and pitch their tents in the fields hard by the Parsonage.'

"I wonder at first what connexion there is between the replies of the old man and the questions which I had addressed to him; but I soon find out that there is a connexion in his mind, although I could not readily, and at first, discover it. His wishes and his pleasures were in the by-gone days, and not in the present ones; and the silent grave of time had entombed his joys, past all my powers of recalling. There is a season when Pleasure has removed from the road before us, and has taken up her station in the far distance behind; and such a season had now arrived to the old man who was the first object of my attention and regard. Pleasure had not faded from his remembrance, but she needed him to look back at her to be able to know exactly what she was, and to trace any way correctly her beautiful lineaments.

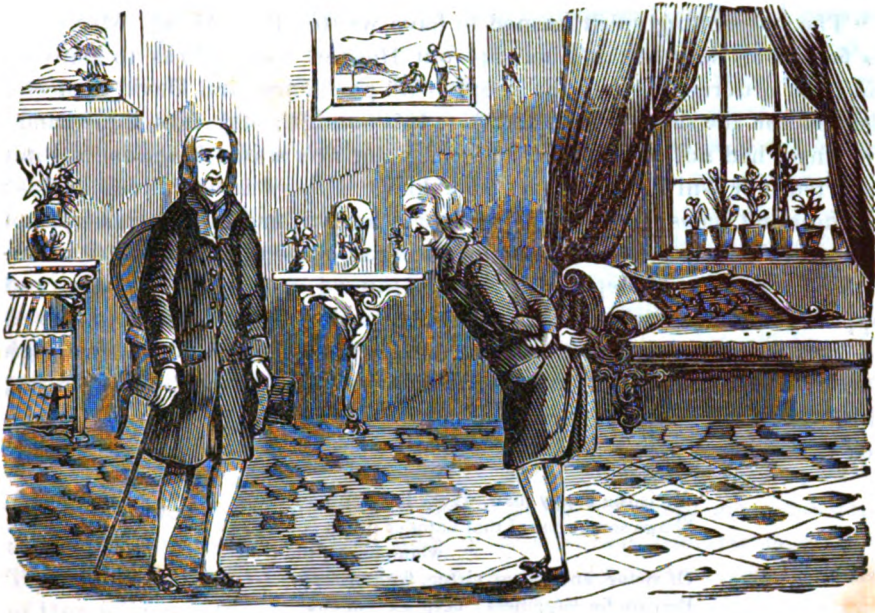
"I turn from him (because I perceive him to be past the age at which he can give me any satisfactory account of himself), to inquire about him of his neighbours, but I find that they do not attempt to make any sense of what he says; they all look upon him as in his dotage, or as an idiot, because he talks of pleasure and enjoyment. Alas! that they should be forced by their own fate to judge so of the man who, being one in their own state and condition of life, speaks of happiness and joy!

"Yet, so it is—the men who have arrived to but thirty years, perhaps, have lived long enough in the world to find their gratifications passed away, and become the mere shadow and phantom of a name!

"The vanity of worldly pleasures is never written more legibly than on the face of the poverty-stricken man; who, if you can imagine him (as you must imagine him, he being a human being) to have a wish for happiness, shows plainly that disappointment has blighted all his hopes.

"I pity from my heart the poor old man. 'Shameful is it,' I exclaim to myself, 'that the rich can neglect the poor as they do!—and that, too, when they could, at no cost or trouble to themselves, gratify them. He is most unworthy who denies them pleasure, when it is a great pleasure to them even to recollect that Squire Jones lived in such or such a house.' It has often been remarked, and indeed it is a most just and proper observation, that all classes of society depend upon each other—that the rich can as little do without the poor, as the poor without the rich. How entirely the poor do depend upon the wealthy is apparent, not so much from the way they ask for assistance towards getting them some food and clothing, as from the manner in which each trivial act of a Squire is talked of and made great and important in the estimation of the humbler order of our countrymen.

"The next man I notice at my levee is entirely different from the former; yet he is nearly, or quite, as advanced in age. He stands like a



soldier, so manly and upright in his figure and deportment. He has a truly fine cast of features—showing faith, resignation, and affliction, blended in his countenance. Like some noble old tree that would and could have propped the bending tree of no older growth beside it—so does he stand, next to the man I have before described, who, though no more aged than he is, is yet bending low, while this man is sufficiently energetic and upright to have supported him.

“How differently do various men take the same hard usage! Some seem to be overcome and vanquished, whilst others, though pressed upon strongly and sternly, yet arise from the battle-field almost uninjured, and certainly unconquered. The mind and body of a man frequently go together in this respect, as to their resistance or non-resistance.

“Time and sorrow and decay have placed their solemn warning on the face of him I am now contemplating; there is there to be seen approaching death; but there is also to be discovered never-failing hope and consolation. It is a vain and impossible thing for any man to try and prevent sadness and suffering from grieving and oppressing his mind, and, consequently, from wearing and injuring his body; but it is in the power of religion (and this power is continually displayed) to show that man is well contented that his frame should decay, because he has an earnest and trustful hope of a glorious future. Such, indeed, is the sense of religion which this man possesses; not a dull and gloomy one, which tends to make men wretched and unhappy, but one which, if it find them in disquietude and woe, makes them cheerful, by telling them of never-ending pleasure, and of brighter delights than those of earth.

men in our holy places of prayer, let them be ever so humble and despised in the estimation of men of the world. Many people are well pleased at the appearance of those who have handsome pews, with their arms emblazoned above, and the hatchments of their mighty ancestors suspended over the places where they sit. But these old men look to me like the firm and handsome marble pillars which really belong to, and suit and adorn the church; they who have stood unmoved and unshaken by neglect, by sorrow, and by suffering. They come to church to praise Heaven for its bounties poured out upon them, whilst their temporal comforts are few and fluctuating; they can say, with the same faithful confidence with which the words were first spoken, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' They can acknowledge that they are dealt with in mercy, although they are left with wishes ungratified, and prayers *apparently* unanswered.

Ah! have none of our rich churchwardens, squires, and justices of the peace, anything to imitate in the conduct of the feeble old man who stands tottering in the aisle? Which man is he who best supports the church? The humble, faithful Christian is surely a powerful instrument in the hand of Him who governs all things, to preserve His truth and His worship in our land; while he who affects to patronize, by his appearance, the house of prayer, may be about as useful to the church as the gilded figure which may be seen attached to some of our spires, which some consider an embellishment, but others conceive wholly *unsuited* to the building. At all events, he never can give stability or security to anything; while the other is important to our well-being. The one is an essential, the other a nullity. It may be said of the former, (if I may quote afresh from a poet whom no one will object to having brought before him again and again,)

'Perhaps the self-approving, haughty world,
That, as she sweeps him with her whistling silks,
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes.'

"I am anxious—out of a wish to alleviate the condition of the old man to whom I last introduced you, if poverty is his lot at the present time—to inquire about his state; but really, from the character of the man, I am ashamed to do so. I am ashamed to ask him about his poverty and his sorrows; and when at length I do so, it is with a blushing countenance; for it seems like an impertinence to be prying into what he has ever kept secret—most secret—from the observation and the hearing of the world. Doubtless he has sometimes heaved in retirement the sigh of regret at the disappointments and the hardships which have attended him. (Alas! who

that has attained to any age has not had cause to sigh over the failure of plans and the disappointment of hopes?) Yet in his conversation and bearing he has seemed as cheerful as if nought had ever gone wrong with him, and as if his day of existence had been one of an unclouded and brilliant sunshine.

“When I have at length taken courage to make my inquiries as to his condition, and when he may easily see that I am both able and willing to assist him, the old man turns towards me, and addresses me thus in reply:—

“‘Thank you, Sir, thank you,—but I am pretty comfortable; I have nothing to complain of.’

“‘Yet I fear,’ I answer, ‘that you have known what it is to want—what it is to be in hunger and cold; for care has made its furrows in your cheek, though good humour and contentment sparkle in your eye and adorn your countenance.’

“‘Why, Sir,’ he answers me, ‘to tell you the truth of the matter, (for I like to tell the truth at all times,) I have had my sorrows the same as other folks have had theirs; but I’m thankful to say that they are pretty well over now.’

“His sorrows over! And yet he is sickly;—who could see his complexion, and not own it? He is poor;—who could look upon his ragged coat and his other tattered vestments, and not confess it? He puts me in mind of the hero of that beautiful tale of Mrs. Hannah More, ‘The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,’ (a tale which when one reads, one scarcely knows whether most to admire the hero or the author,) who was as ingenious in discovering sources of pleasure in his lot, as many persons are in finding justifying causes for their discontent and repinings.

“How many men are there in prosperous circumstances (as far as this world goes) who will tell a tale far different from this! With them, every little annoyance—a tooth-ache, or an ear-ache—is talked of and sighed about perpetually, and is made the subject of bitter lamentations; and—more ridiculous still—the inconvenience which a servant caused, by not coming when the bell was rung,—or the displeasure which an acquaintance gave, who, being a mere acquaintance, yet took the liberty to come upstairs without letting the domestic precede and announce him. And these matters are not alone matters of complaint at the very period when they occur; but they are subsequently talked of, and are made evergreens in the deserts of their memories. The remembrance of their whole life, like that of Youth in the beautiful proverb, is a sigh.

“There is, however, I have throughout life observed, a blessing attendant on the good man’s path; and this it is—and so great and excellent an one is it, that I have often longed, from the bottom of my soul, that I could attain unto it:—though, *after* he has gone through difficulties and dangers, he sees the *depth* of the woes that are past, he does not see them in

the same manner whilst he is enduring them. He is like a man passing in the night-time along a narrow road, with precipices on each side, and a roaring sea spread below them. When morning comes, he looks back and trembles to see what he has passed; but at the time, all he knows and thinks is that *he is on his way to his home*. Did he not know that he is on his way to the place where his heart is already fixed, and did he fear to be destroyed every moment by the dangers around him, he would almost inevitably perish.

"I get into some further conversation with the old man, and I immediately find that he has experienced much ill-treatment from other men, and has endured great ingratitude and provocation from them; and yet he is perfectly unrevengeful and kind-hearted towards all those who have either offended or been ungenerous towards him. I find also that he looks continually to Heaven in all things, and is willing to thank Heaven, not only for every blessing he enjoys, but, indeed, for each thing which occurs to him, and however unconnected, in the minds of worldlings, it might be with Heaven and Heaven's dealings.

"*'Truly,'* I remark to myself, *'it would be well, if, in this thing also, we all learned to emulate the conduct of this my venerable friend.'* I mean, that, as by a word of comfort it is possible to raise in his mind a rational, lively, and Christian joy,—and that, as, by conferring some unasked-for benefit, we can raise to heaven the gratitude of an ardent and glowing mind,—it were well if, when anything of the like kind is rendered to us, similar results would follow, and similar blessings be attained.—As it is, we too often accept kindnesses, which, if they excite in us feelings of gratitude at all, it is still but a gratitude to the fellow-creature who has served us, without a reference to Him who disposes the heart of one man to sympathize and sorrow for another: we may be spoken to in words of encouragement or of pity, when distresses come upon and oppress us, and these words are frequently the means of creating such hilarity and mirth as is truly earthly in its character, and unelevated in its nature. There are very many lessons which we might learn from the meanest and the poorest, if we would condescend to do so: but, proud and conceited, we disdain to take instruction from any below ourselves in those small and petty distinctions which are entirely separated from the real and important differences which distinguish one man from another—rectitude of conduct and intellectuality of mind.

"Next to this old man to whom I have been alluding for some time past, and who (as I believe I have mentioned) is very tall and stately in his appearance, stands another person who is very little indeed—a slender and weak girl, who bears about her the sad, the melancholy traces of the hard work, the buffetings, and the sorrows, which mark the early days of such young things, when they are the offspring of poor parents. Who that is a man, and has any respect for the sex which is the cause of the joy of

his happiest hours, and the alleviation of the misery of his most melancholy ones, can look upon these young girls, the children of distressed fathers and mothers, without bitterness of heart and grief of spirit? They to whom men should look with all tenderness and affection, with love and gratitude, for their sex's sake,—they are seen sorrow-bowed, and labour-bent, long ere they reach to woman's estate.

“She of whom I now speak is of that size and of that cast of features (of the former even more than the latter), that, were she in a higher and wealthier station, I should ask if she were not the youngest member of her family;—as it is, it would be idle and a mockery to ask,—for she is evidently the eldest,—proved to be so by an indubitable mark,—that of labour and of toil. This gentle creature—the first-born—the one whom her mother welcomed into being and looked upon with the doting and entranced eyes with which we can all picture to ourselves a mother looking upon her first-born the day that it is ushered into existence—has now become the servant and the drudge of the whole household.

“Brothers have followed her and have supplanted her. No care is now given to her; but she is to give the care to which the eldest seems entitled, to the youngest of the children.—Brothers have come, and, Jacob-like, they have taken away her birthright.

“She looks as if she has numbered many years, though few indeed are really those which she has passed. But truly she *has* numbered many years; for, besides those actually and individually her own, she has lived the lives also of five younger children; feeling all the sorrows, the wailings, the sicknesses, of their infancy, and knowing to an hour the peculiar times of their restlessness, their passion, and their power. She knows the first, by the sleepless hours which she has passed when herself a child, in walking them about when they could not repose for the fretfulness of babyhood:—she knows the second, by the blows which she has received from her youngers, and has, of course, as the eldest, been forced to submit to in patience:—and she knows the last, by the force with which they have compelled her to do their bidding, and act the obedient slave to those whom nature seemed to mark out as her inferiors by her right of birth. There she stands, looking so that one might be disposed to think she had never been taken notice of by any person in a station superior to her own, were it not for the cast-off clothes which she wears. Evidently cast-off! Alas! that *this* should be the only sign of her having been looked upon! Yet, too often is this the case in all our bounty. It is often but the leavings—the non-wanted—which are bestowed upon those who require all our aid and all our sympathy. It is better, however, that even so much as that, which we ourselves despise, should not be denied, than that the crumbs that fall from the table should be denied to the petitioner at the gate. How lamentable, that any upon whom the shower of plenty descends, can neglect to suffer the drops that fall from their trees, which

are brightened and perfumed by the invigorating rain, to water and nourish the humble plants that are placed below them!—who neglect to give what has already faded from any pleasant place in their memory, and is almost moth-eaten whilst still in their possession!

“The clothes of this poor girl plainly evince that they have belonged to several different persons—I mean one article to one person, and another to another, and so on. Some of her habiliments are so spare for her, and others are so unnecessarily large, that I cannot help imagining (rather fancifully) that the former were given with a grudge, and the latter accompanied by a scolding; and I think so all the more because both the former and the latter are so unsuited to that neat figure and that gentle face. Ladylikeness is a character which seems to belong to some particular people as a birthright, although they may not be born in that station to the members of which the epithet of ‘lady’ is usually applied. This girl is one of that species; for she is a lady in thought and mind, though almost a beggar so far as fortune is concerned; and quite untitled, if there is no title but that of rank which deserves the name. I turn towards the girl, but I do not speak; I only look upon her, feeling sure that she will begin to speak to me, and will tell me all her woes. I dare say, my friends, you have observed how well young people—and, I may add, even the brute creation—know when any individual is inclined to treat them kindly, and to sympathise in their distress. If such were not the case, why would the dog, uncalled, and, it may be, well-nigh unseen, follow to his own house the stranger who passes him in the street, and urge his entrance into that mansion which he knows will be an hospitable one to him, from the mere circumstance and aspect of the owner of it? If such were not the case, why would the infant open its little arms at the sight of one whom he had never before beheld, and crow with joy at looking upon a face which, till that instant, had been unknown to him? There is, doubtless, an instinct which, in both child and dog, leads to such a course.

“The poor child whom I now speak of, it is likely enough, (so little has she been educated in any manner,) would not know how to frame her woes into the shape of an answer, were she now questioned about them; for about her sorrows she has never been asked,—but of themselves they must rush out often and often. Sorrow hath a voice of her own, and a language known well to herself and to those under her dominion; and although, peradventure, she may not be able to compose a reply in proper terms to those people who would speak to her either in common words or in metaphor, she hath her own terms and similes, of which she is ever wont to make use. Grief hath no boundaries,—for her sea is a troubled one and a stormy, which defies all attempts to check it within certain limits, and to restrain its impetuous waves. It will spread wherever it wishes, and will make its presence known and felt.

“The words burst forth—‘My mother, Sir, is dying of the dropsy, and

they are going to take her bed from under her ;—because she cannot pay the rent for the last three weeks, they are going to take the bed from under her !’

“ Yes! and so it is! The poor woman, stretched upon her wretched couch, they would wish, ere she be dead, to return to her kindred dust.

“ ‘ And has your mother, then, generally neglected to pay her rent, that they should be so very sharp upon her as to take her bed away for merely a three weeks’ debt?’

“ ‘ No, no, Sir, indeed! I know quite well, for I had always to take the money for her, that she was never behindhand till now; and she would not have been now, if it had not been that her health got so bad she could not manage to earn anything to help her in paying the landlord.’

“ ‘ You say, to help her in paying him: how, then, may I ask you, if she has had so bad a complaint as the dropsy upon her for a long time, (and I suppose she must have had it for a long time, if she is now dying of it,)—how, then, comes it to pass that she should only require a little assistance to enable her to pay her rent? Who helped her with the greater portion of it?’

“ ‘ I did what I could, Sir,’ answers the little girl, colouring up at her own goodness being made known.

“ ‘ And what was that “ what I could,” which you speak of so modestly?’

“ ‘ By getting up, Sir, at five o’clock, and not coming home till late in the evening, I made three shillings a-week; and that was a great help for poor mother.’

“ Dear are such children, and well-pleasing in the eyes of Him—that Great One—who delights to be called and to be known by them as their Father in heaven! This child works harder than a strong man, to bear sixpence home to a poor sick mother.

“ The next of my guests, standing near to this little girl, is one of those men whom we commonly designate as commonplace men—the kind of men who never cause any attention or notice till they are on the way to the gallows; then we are struck with them, and exclaim, ‘ Surely we have seen these men somewhere or other?’ But after a short time we are forced to add, ‘ No, perhaps we have not seen these particular men anywhere;’—for then we recollect that we have seen similar men every day; and we shudder to think that there are those going to the gallows about whom there are no innate marks of villany, and who have been led into crime by the abject poverty of their circumstances. Had they been but above the reach of penury, they might have been saved a death of ignominy,—alas! perhaps a death of reckless levity, or gloomy despair!

“ But, possibly, since you have such kindly feelings of interest about my fancies (an interest of which you are all certainly giving the strongest possible evidence), you will desire me to describe in some more definite

manner the man to whom I have in the last place alluded. He is the man (or rather *a* man) that shoved against you in the street a few days ago;—and he is also the man that was looking at the man who so came against you. He is exactly commonplace;—precisely as all are: he has no wish to be otherwise; his ambition is to be as others. Whatever things he does, they are done to make himself distinguished (if you will pardon the expression) only for being exactly as the undistinguished. He claims no higher honour than to be unhonoured; and seeks the popularity, not of the victor or the poet, but that which he will obtain by being just like a host of others, who are never mentioned but in the plural,—who are never known or spoken of by any one, out of their own home, but as ‘the populace.’ Nor can we wonder at this—wonder that he does not strive to be anything beyond other men; for when he finds how hard and how difficult it is to be equal with the millions who can only get a piece of bread and a draught of water, can we suppose that he will aspire to anything beyond such a state? But on this point we are often whimsically inconsistent;—we despise those who do not attempt to soar beyond that mean and humble condition in which Providence has placed them; and yet it is quite as usual for us to blame those who make any efforts at all to elevate themselves and improve their station. The former class of men are denominated vulgar in mind and character; the latter are deemed presumptuous, and unworthy of that sphere to which their hopes and aspirations point. Men blame their fellow-men, whatever course they may pursue; and it is natural that that course should ordinarily be adopted which gives the least trouble and inconvenience to the parties themselves. But in the sort of man whom I am now bringing before your notice, his every action shows the entire degradation of his nature: as an instance,—even if he make his hair tidy, he does so by stroking it smooth over his face, to hide, as it were, the front, which is the noblest sign of the indwelling soul and mind. He becomes, in fact, a mere animal; created, as it were, to serve the common purposes of animal nature—to act like the beasts that perish, and to leave behind him no record of one exalted deed or one noble thought. The seeds of higher things are crushed within him by the iron weight of poverty, or the still heavier burthen of neglect. The consequence is, that their earth, which is now in great part an uncultivated and barren ground, lies thus fallow, whilst it might have been made to yield an abundant, an excellent harvest of good.

“‘I suppose,’ I remark, addressing myself to the man I speak of, who stands before me as a sample of a whole race like unto himself,—‘I suppose you are a single man? You live alone, I presume?’ For there does not appear to me to be in his character a single promontory of any kind, on which the shadow, even, of an affection could fall. The woman who loved him must, it seems to me, have loved thousands of others since thousands are precisely of the same stamp and character. There is

about him no individuality — nothing by which a woman could identify her love, did she desire to traverse the world in search of him, if he wandered away from her. Did he so wander from her, and she so pursue him, describing her lost one, and crying, ‘Where is my love?’ a thousand men might answer, instead of Echo, replying, (not less correctly than Echo herself did,) — ‘Here!’ — for so many like him are everywhere.

“‘Oh no, Sir!’ he answers, ‘I’m not a single man; my missus is at home. She is much too ill to come out at all now.’

“‘Then,’ say I, again interrogatively, ‘she is confined to her bed?’

“‘Oh no! Sir,’ he replies; ‘I have told her to look after the six young ones at home.’

“‘Poor woman!’ I think to myself; ‘now that she is too ill to move about, she is left to watch—as a recreation—six brisk tormenters; after she has been long toiling for the support of them, and of her clown of a husband! I have no doubt, now she is ill, and scarcely fit to do anything; whatever, however gentle and easy it might be, her husband says to her, when at his own cottage,—“Come, Sally! you must take this baby; it gets so heavy.” She is to do the work suited for a man; whilst he, from laziness and dullness, will not do those things which even a woman’s strength could perform.’

“Truly, since this man is dear to any woman’s heart, the character of woman’s love is here again plainly manifested: although I cannot see in this man before me the source or origin of any, the smallest, love, there still is something which has called forth the mighty, the quenchless river, the stupendous Nile, of woman’s priceless love. And perhaps there is something the most delightful in woman’s tenderness, when we see it displayed towards such a being as this one: we then find that her affection is not necessarily given to mere beauty of form or face, or even to splendour of talents and attractiveness of manner; but that it is sometimes conferred on those whom the whole world beside despises; and that, for all this, the love is as firm and enduring as that which is bestowed upon the most gifted and generally admired of all human creatures.

“Next, again, stands one of those dried-up, parchment-looking, skinny old women, who always seem as if they might have stood in the same spot for hundreds of years, so little have they of hope or of expectancy to cause them to move; were it not that they would be certain to be carried off by the police, and punished for thus breaking the peace by standing still in one spot and remaining peaceable. She is exactly such a woman as may be seen fixed at the corner of some wretched alley in great cities, to all appearance without a motive for her so tarrying, and as apparently without one reason to make her take her departure thence. She is such a person as stands by the door of the workhouse for hours together, and yet without being entitled to receive any benefit from that place; neither stopping for the sake of seeing any one who is within, but stopping simply

because she has nowhere she cares to go to, and no one she cares to see. There stands the woman before me, without one hope that mortal could gratify: for her, all pleasure is for ever dead. She stands a peaceful Canute, who can bid the stream of time, with all its various changes, its passing joys, and its endless vicissitudes, flow on, without reaching her so as to move her from her repose—that stream on which the flowers that adorn it are for ever passing by, and which, in its noiseless but steady course, sweeps away so much that is gay and fair, and leaves so many homes and hearts desolate. She might be found in any of the sarcophagi of Egypt, and no one would have supposed that she was a living being who had by some accident got within, but would have at once deemed that she was a mummy who had been dried and placed there, and had now come forth a specimen of the art of the Egyptians in embalming.

“She is a gloomy object for any one to look upon; and yet she stands surrounded by human beings, looking more sepulchral still. She bears in her withered hand a coloured handkerchief—the only thing about her not in mourning; for she carries all the traces of poverty and of widowhood; and the handkerchief—the proper office of which should have been to dry up tears—now wraps up a petition which she ever carries in her hand, and which calls forth no sympathy. Strange variety of employment!—that which might have served to dry up bitter tears, is now used as an envelope in which the history of grief is enclosed; and the purpose of in any way checking that sorrow is as little apparently accomplished in the latter case as in the former. She is a widow: that alone ought to have been enough to call forth pity for her woes, and produce an earnest wish in many to see to her well-doing; but, alas! it would seem that what ought to have been is not what has been, and that the aged widow’s aged petition has been unserviceable and void.

“I made up my mind, when I called the levee together, that I would speak with *all* of those who might attend to my request; yet, whilst acting upon this preconceived intention, and approaching her to speak, I cannot help, almost unconsciously, feeling a kind of spite and ill will towards her, though I mean to profess nothing but what is benevolent and kind. My friends! you will, doubtless, be surprised at this, and wish to know how it can be that I can have any such bad feelings called forth at the sight of a helpless old woman—and that woman a widow; more particularly after I have all along declared myself to be one moved at the sight of suffering, and no sooner beholding it than anxious for its mitigation, or (if possible) its removal. The fact, however, is, that I had a spite towards her, because by her look she has deprived me of all the glitter of my equipage, of all the elegance of my male friends’ bearing, and of all the bloom of health on my fair friends’ cheeks; for her look has told me the perishing nature of all such things. She was once, perhaps, comfortably off, healthy, and even graceful; now she looks sickly, withered,

and dismal. She at any rate proves how utterly the adornments and ornaments of life can sink to nothing, and yet how the mere animal creation can live on, and walk about the earth. I manage sufficiently to check the feelings of *anger* (for I am weak enough to let them rise to so great a pitch as to be worthy of that description), to approach the woman, and ask her her name, and where she lives;—and she answers not, but stands mute and melancholy. I then think it better to change the form of my inquiries, and request to know in what way I can best serve her; as I think such a query will be the most likely of anything that I could say to produce a reply. She hands me her petition; there is a great difficulty in opening it, for it has been pressed for so long a time in her aged hand, being refused by so many to whom it has been tendered. It has constantly sought the notice of all those who have come in the way of the woman as she has carried it about, but it has sought it, alas! too frequently in vain. The folds of the petition are firm and strong, literally making the roll, which would have been lengthy had it been unfurled, into a fit size for the pocket of a poor woman, or the fancy-bag of a rich one. The bare sight of such a document is enough to call up visions of all the proud footmen, with their powdered heads, who have refused the ‘humble memorial,’ and of all dignified ladies, with their beautiful feathers, who have declined soiling their light kid gloves with so unclean a paper. I feel sure



that, if I were to decline to take it, I should be but doing as many a person has done before me. But, in spite of this encouragement to keep it closed, and in spite of the discouragement to open it, of its being so well and

tightly folded, I contrive to undo the petition, and find it to be very beautifully written, fit for a copy of penmanship to be given to schoolboys when in the pursuit of their studies ; only, alas ! this paper shows of how little advantage good writing sometimes is ! It is one proof, amongst others, of the slight use of which writing sometimes is, that that which is in copper-plate, of the most excellent description, is expended on an application for relief, which, probably, gains no attention, and remains, for weeks and weeks, unread and disregarded. Matters are not quite so hopeless, however, inside this particular paper as I had anticipated, for it is not an entire blank, with the exception of the application. I had thought, that it would be as void as the face of the woman who stands before me, and as hopeless as is her expression of countenance.

“ The first name on the list of subscribers for this widow-woman is very badly written—quite disfiguring the good penmanship which appears above it : it is evidently the writing of the keeper of some petty shop, and it shows that the donor gave half-a-crown towards the relief of the being whom he commiserated. The next contribution is written in a dashing, gentlemanly hand—‘ A friend ; ’—and the sum the friend afforded is one shilling. The latter was one of those who decline to insert their full names and addresses ; the word Colonel, or Esquire, is missing, and so also is the park, or the mansion, which the donor occupied. He was one of a class who

‘ do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame : ’

and with very good reason indeed he might blush to find it so. The name and the amount for the widow would not have looked well on the back of his confectioner’s bill.

“ After these two contributions, what follows ? Lines, ruled to the end of a long page, as if in anticipation of the public yielding a most liberal support for the poor widow : lines ruled—and all else a blank. Not one amongst the many the widow has called upon has been disposed to copy even the niggardly example of the gentleman who gave a shilling which he would never miss, and cared not whether he bestowed or not. I was tempted, when I first really gave my attention to the petition, to grow indignant with the man, who I feel sure, by his writing, was a gentleman, and yet who gave no higher boon to the suffering female who asked his benevolence than a trifling shilling ; but when I come to consider how very, very many the widow has no doubt sought, who yet would not give even the shilling, I am inclined to judge him more leniently.

“ I read the petition throughout ; it is certified by the clergyman of the parish to which the woman belonged, as well as by the churchwardens. Heartrending, indeed, and melancholy, are the details ;—and after I have finished them I look with wonder and amazement at the long blank page, without a single name after the two contributors whom I have mentioned.

"How many ladies and gentlemen has that woman applied to, who would have laughed at the idea of their ever feeling the want of a shilling, had one of those coins been dropped by accident in their walk or ride!—And yet those very same individuals have refused a similar sum to a fellow-creature whose woes have been placed before them in so plain a manner that they could not, but by a wilful blindness, overlook them; and so fully certified that they could not doubt their truth. 'Verily,' I think to myself, as I read the miserable details of destitution, and look at the blank below, 'there is abundance of room here for the recording angel to write of those who would not write for themselves!'

"But my attention is now directed, from single individuals to whom it has previously been given, to a circle of persons not far from the poor woman I have last described. There is a space left in the midst of them, and some signs of pleasure are depicted on the faces of those who surround it. I am somewhat startled at the sight of the joy shown on the countenances of those who are there,—for joy is not one of the characteristics of those people who are assembled as visitors at my levee. I have had sufficient experience of the world (and more especially of the lower orders) to know the reason of the delight shown in their faces;—I am sure a little child is there in the centre,—and so it proves. It stands the kind of sun from which the rays of pleasure come to those who are about it.

A child is ever a sun from which the rays of happiness emanate: perhaps it is so in remembrance of our own childhood, which was the season of our merriest hours and our simplest, purest rapture;—or perhaps it is so, because, in the presence of one of these little ones, childhood has its presence most visibly made known.—Childhood! dear, happy childhood! how do my mind and heart now turn to you in deep affection, and unchanging truth! I recollect well every spot which I visited when some few brief summers only had passed over my head, and every spot (let it have been in ever so bleak a situation, and ever so dull a neighbourhood) in which I so sojourned seems lovelier to me now than all the romantic scenes, the woody valleys and the verdant fields, over which I have since traversed! But it is idle to talk of this, for all other men, on this point, feel as I do.

"The child who forms the object of attraction to the persons who are around it, is one of those who have (as most of them have by nature) a taste for the beautiful and the good. If it ever sees a lady's hand, it is ready to insert its tiny palm into the midst of it; and if there is a smile upon any one's lip, it can discover it in a moment, and return smile for smile;—in the former instance showing its taste for, and appreciation of, the fair and lovely; in the latter, its regard for, and estimation of, the good. And when the child smiles, what a smile is it!—so frank—so free—so open—so utterly at variance with that cold, crafty, covetous smile, which comes over the faces of men, when they are endeavouring to win

over somebody, whom they address, to some scheme which is to prove of advantage to their own secular interests.

"You all, I can venture to say, have seen some little child, whom directly you have beheld, you have been inclined to exclaim, 'What a great deal of pains has been taken with this child!' and yet, when you have come to an investigation, you have discovered that the young one has been but roughly and carelessly attired. Such is the child before me. It has been born of the poorest and meanest of parents, and yet it is worthy to be numbered with the descendants of the wealthy and the noble. I am by no means an advocate for the levelling system, which declares the peasant to be equal to the prince, and which would place the former in all respects on a par with the latter; yet it is remarkable how, sometimes, the great differences which many men are pleased to make between the rich and the poor, the high-born and the low-born, are levelled by Nature, which produces in the lowest station apt ornaments for the highest.

"But perhaps you may wonder at first, my good and patient listeners, what there can be in this child, so badly dressed as it certainly is, which could lead any one to think, on seeing it, what pains had been taken with it. The fact is, it is so attractive because, like the lilies of the field in which its father is compelled to toil, it is purely and simply natural. Solomon in all his glory wanted this one charm to his grandeur; and the want of this made his grandeur less pleasing than the simple flowers which strewed his path; namely—that the robes he wore were those made by the craft of man and the skill of a human artificer, and not by the hand of Him whose wisdom is as far above our wisdom, and whose skill is as far above our skill, as His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. The meanest plant Solomon trod under his foot declared itself superior to all the show of the mighty monarch.

"Well! but I am going to pass by the child of whom I have just been speaking, supposing that it is not yet of sufficient age to speak, and I merely stop to see which amongst the men who are standing near to it is the parent who has brought it thither. As a way of identifying the father, I look to see the direction in which the eyes of the men are fixed; for I feel sure that the parent's eye will be fixed on his child, although there may be enough in my room of a certain elegance of show (being an unusual sight to my present guests) to rivet the regard of all present, excepting a man who has his child present before him. Could I have placed the man in the presence of emperors and of potentates, I feel assured that his eye would have been upon his own child, however humble the little one might have appeared in the estimation of others, and however little it may have been cared for by them. Rather than have lost sight of his boy, the father's sight would have failed to discern the throne covered with velvet, and the royal crown studded with diamonds and precious stones.

"The child perceives me coming towards him, and I soon find that he can speak—that, while for himself (that is, so far as he is individually concerned) he has only smiles, for his mother and for his sister and brothers he has a tongue. Eloquently, most eloquently, does he plead for them in his broken and feeble accents. He could feel that he wanted better and more plenteous food; yet he could smile and be good-tempered and pleasant in spite of his individual cravings; but when he thinks of his dear mother and the playmates of his childhood, he could weep plenteous and bitter tears, and he is ready to do anything by which he may gain help for them, and beg the succour which, for himself alone, he would have been much too timid and diffident to ask from any one.

"'Alas!' I mentally exclaim,—'no wonder that he speaks well on such a subject as hunger! I doubt not but that that subject called forth his first word, and that, ere he lisped the usual first word of love, he spake for BREAD!' The name of mamma, or something which corresponds to that sweetest of epithets, is, I believe, in every country, the introductory word which the child uses. And although, doubtless, the wish for that nutriment which, by the beautiful ordinance of Providence, the bosom of the parent furnishes to her offspring, affords one cause for the sound of 'mamma' issuing from the child's lips, yet I believe also that the love, the innate love, of the child for its mother, furnishes a still more sufficient cause for its first-uttered word.

"Unhappy children—who are forced, as it were, to call for the mother, simply from cravings of hunger, and to pass over the cravings of love which warm their infant breasts!

"Near to the child I have described stands a tall and thin young man, who is evidently in a very bad state of health, suffering from a complaint which is incurable. Death has marked him—like Melancholy, in the charming poem of Gray—for his own.

"He has such a pallid cheek and such a bright glassy eye, that I should suppose, were the young man placed in the darkest of rooms, his cheek and his eye would still be discernible—the former by its intense whiteness, the latter by its intense fire.

"As, when a young bird is seen perched upon a bough, and carolling forth its native song of praise and happiness, we are aware that it will soon be far away from us; and that, if we would look upon it, we must look at that very moment; so with this young man—we see that he is about to flit from us, and to visit regions which our imaginations even cannot reach.

"How very painful it is to look upon this young man! At an age when a man is usually most hearty and strong, he is in a state of extreme debility and weakness. He leans upon a stick which he carries to support his bending form; and he draws his breath—every breath—as if he was doing some great work; and when each breath is drawn, he looks round as if

for rest, and looks in vain. Poor man! Yet he goes not unprepared to heaven who has performed a work every moment, and in each breath has offered up to Heaven a patient sacrifice. I could tell that the young man was near me, although he never intentionally moved or spoke; and his glaring eyes bear testimony to the suffering which he endures, and yet which he never wishes to make known to any living being. He is an object most painful, and yet most worthy admiration;—painful, from the distress he suffers,—admirable, from the manner in which he endures it. His head seldom stands still,—it is for ever turning hither and thither, as if he sought some lulling charm in each direction, yet found it not. Alas! the beauties of Creation are not for him, so far as any amelioration of his condition is concerned. For him, the loveliness of nature remains, but without the power to amuse or satisfy. For him, the green curtain of nature has for ever fallen upon the play of life.—

‘For him, the billowy, bounding wave,
The wide green earth, the far blue sky,’

are no more than mere creatures—admirable, indeed, in themselves, yet possessing no merits which can draw away attention for a moment from inward pain, bodily weakness, and mental depression. I wish to speak to every one who should be present at my levee, but I hardly know what to say to this man, who is so evidently passing fast away from the world.

“I want to speak to him, and I would fain say I hope he will get better, and that I think he will; but if it be difficult to look in any man’s face and tell him an untruth, to look in this one’s pallid and worn countenance, and tell him so great a falsehood, is impossible. He would certainly know the thing to be false, and he could not but despise the man who uttered it; or think, else, that I was mocking him, and trying to deceive him in a matter on which I could not be so ignorant. I merely ask him, therefore, how he is; he answers me that nothing will ever do him good; that for a long time he has been getting gradually worse and worse; that he finds his strength sinking every day; and that such a languor comes over him that he cannot think of anything or do anything for himself or others. I can well appreciate, from actual experience—through an illness of short duration which I once endured—how entirely power and spirit are taken away by severe indisposition.

“I ask him if he recollects how the illness first began, which unhappily has turned out so badly in the end. He answers me, that, when he was first attacked by illness, it was unaccompanied by many of the present symptoms; (he believes it was an inflammation of the lungs under which he then suffered;) but when he applied to the parish-doctor, he said he could do nothing for him; and so he never came after the first day.

“‘You do not, in truth, mean, my friend,’ I ask, ‘that the doctor never

came again? For we all know what a little care and attention may do, if bestowed at the beginning; and how any complaint, not taken at first, creeps on, and extends to what is bad, and even incurable.'

" 'It is true indeed, Sir,' he replies,—'it is all true; yet I do not blame the doctor, for he was only given a very, very small sum a-year to attend to a very large parish, and he was forced to neglect some of the poor to attend to the rich, or he could not have got enough to live upon.'

" 'Yes!' I think to myself, (you all know how fond I am of thinking to myself,) 'this is one of the beautiful arrangements of the law: thus the parish-surgeons neglect their poor patients—and how can it be expected otherwise? The great object in such arrangements seems to be, how little can be made to serve for the poor, and not how they can be effectually assisted. I do not mean that money should be lavishly expended on the humbler orders, and that, without regard to expense, they should be attended to and looked after; but I *do* think, most certainly, that what is done for them should be done effectually; and that a few pounds should not be saved when the outlay of them would be beneficial to the needy and the lowly. Do not let us sacrifice a man for the sake of a shilling; for the increase of such a sum per head would enable the parish-doctor to live, and, consequently, to give his attention to those who require it.

" 'But while we lament that the doctors do, in many cases, neglect the poor to whom it is their province to attend, I cannot *wonder* that they do so; they are compelled to receive such a payment for giving their medical skill and knowledge to many hundreds of persons, and for exposing themselves to cold and rain, to fatigue and trouble, as would not satisfy a servant for his duties of footman in a gentleman's family. They are lowered in their terms almost to nothing;—they are lowered down—down—down'—But, as I said this, I kept lowering my hand expressively, till I started to find it touch the ground!—the cold and *silent ground*. The connexion in my mind was disagreeable,—it was that which made me start,—the connexion, I mean, that is between the sick and their medical advisers,—between the parish doctor and the parish patients.—I must seek some fresh person in my levee to whom to address myself.

"It was certainly no advance made on the part of the next man to whom I attend which induces me to single him out from others who are near him. He stood trembling, literally trembling with fright, as if he had no right to be in my room, nor, indeed, to be anywhere. Poor frightened creature! he looks as if *the round world* has no place suited for him; for there are no corners in it for him to hide in. It amazes me to see a man in such a state of alarm before another man like unto himself in passions and feelings—in hopes and wishes—in heart and mind: it amazes me, so long as he has not the consciousness of guilt in his secret soul. For wherefore, in the name of common sense, should he tremble? It is in his power to be equal to any man with whom he is in company, in all

the most important points;—his equal in moral qualities, in power of thought and feeling, and sentiments of truth and uprightness. But he is such a scared and terrified being, with his frightened look and his quick breathing, that in his fear he has lost all that noble manliness which is the great ornament of the human creature. He is a complete personification of the passion described by Collins in his celebrated ode,—who

‘ Back recoil’d, he knew not why,
E’en at the sound himself had made ;’

for each time that he breathes audibly, he seems afraid that he is committing a fault in breathing so loudly, and is ready and anxious to apologize,—only his modesty will not permit him to utter the words his heart dictates. So he stands and shakes like an aspen-leaf, although there is no stormy breeze to move him, nor any likelihood of such arising on the present occasion. His fixed eyes look like the eyes of a statue, in which you can trace that it cannot see, and yet you can distinguish also that the eyelids cannot close.

“He presses his hands convulsively together, and the cold damp stands upon his pale forehead. He is anxious, as all frightened people are, that he should be spoken to, as that would relieve him from having to address me; and yet he fears to see me open my mouth, as he knows that an answer from him must follow a question from me.

“A word seems each moment to be about to issue from his lips, but it dies away again without making any sound whatever audible. There is a well-known adage that ‘Pity is akin to love;’ but this man’s presence is sufficient to prove the falsity of the assertion, in some cases, at any rate. I pity the man with all my heart, and yet, the very fact of my being compelled so to commiserate, produces a feeling towards him which is more nearly allied to contempt.

“‘Well, my friend,’ I say,—and I address him in as soothing accents as I possibly can,—‘do not be afraid of speaking to me, but let us have a few words together.’

“‘I am not afraid, Sir,’ says the man, trembling even as the accents fall from his agitated lips.

“‘Pray do not be alarmed,’ I continue; ‘you have as much right to be here as any one has; and I am strictly correct in saying so—for the houses of the rich ought to be but as greenhouses for the better nurturing and care of the poor. Strictly speaking, what claim has the great man to his house and his grounds, excepting that Providence has ordained that he shall inherit them from his ancestors? The same Providence that has ordered that these possessions shall be his, has decreed that the rich man should be the steward of the poor man’s goods; that it is his bounden duty, while it is his privilege also, to minister to his lowlier brother’s sufferings and distresses; and that he is to be linked to that

humbler brother by ties of mutual obligation, mutual care, and mutual kindness.'

"But on my observing that this man has as much right to be at my house as anybody else has, the eyes of the whole of the others are turned with the greatest anger and contempt upon this poor creature.

" 'No, no, Sir,' they all cry out at one time, 'he is not a fit object for your relief, and you ought not to do anything for him.'

"I wonder, when I hear this, if the man can really be an unworthy and vicious one, for he bears no marks at all of wickedness about him.

" 'Why,' I ask, turning to the assembled crowd, 'why do you say he is not a fit object for my relief?'

" 'He don't live in the parish, Sir,' is the reply.

"And this is the whole offence the poor man has committed, which is to disqualify him for being a recipient of assistance here. The other poor people about me seem to have no feelings in common with him,—they look upon him as if he had been an evil spirit passed into the world from—another parish!

"I feel my indignation rise up at this. Is it possible that, because a few yards of separation intervene between two places, the bonds of friendship and kindly feeling are in consequence to be completely severed between the people who live at one and the other? We are wont to blame the men who think that the Atlantic rolling between countries is sufficient to justify disunion and uncongeniality between the respective inhabitants; but what shall we say to the idea of a boundary between one parish and another having the same sad and melancholy effects?

"Yet, when I come to turn this subject over in my mind, I perceive that the blame does not rest with the poor: these boundary-lines of heart-separation have been drawn by softer hands than those of the men assembled before me;—hands which never used a spade nor carried a burthen have drawn these lines so very neatly and so very finely. Why find fault with those who act upon principles inculcated upon them,—upon principles which of necessity become incorporated with their own?

"Again I leave, for a period, the man I have been addressing, and turn to one who stands close by him. He is one of those debauched, miserable, wretched creatures, that are unhappily so often seen about our streets and roads. His eyes are winking and blinking as if he is drunken even now, and he seems conscious of only one thing,—and that one thing is that he is so intoxicated. He stands, like Adam, without any knowledge but that of his own degradation.

"How sad their fate who feel themselves humbled in their own estimation, as well as in the opinion of all others whom they meet with in their unstable and melancholy course! It is bad enough to be low in the opinion of all others; it is only better than one thing,—and that is, to be low in our own: to know that we deserve to be despised is worse than to be

so. The confirmed drunkard is the most wretched being in the whole world ; for no one is *so* confirmed even in this crime as not to have his moments of consciousness ; and with the moment of sense comes ever the feeling of degradation and misery.

“ The unfortunate being before me looks every now and then as if he felt the whole horror and danger of his situation, (and when a drunkard does feel this, who can describe his terror and dismay ?) but shortly afterwards he appears as if he did not feel it, *because he thinks of himself as a drunken jovial fellow*. Strange it seems—but not more strange than true—that the very same fact of his drunkenness should at one time put him into a state of trembling and dismay, and at another lull him into indifference, and make him easy and merry. He trembles at one moment when he perceives his sin ; and at the next instant he is comforted by his drunkenness. How I wish that all persons who indulge in this offence would consider—for a single moment—the pure and holy delights which they are sacrificing!—that they would perceive that heaven is before them, and yet that they resign it,—that Mercy outstretches her arm to them, and that they reject the gracious offer,—that high and glorious hopes are placed in their way, and that they crush them beneath the weight of vile and ignoble liquor, beneath the ponderous burthen of what is despicable and debasing ! I have always felt that the sight of a drunkard in the country—the dear, open, free, happy country—was peculiarly painful, with all the delights and glories of the country around. I am always tempted to wonder that any one should be miserable who has the power of beholding such fascinations and treasures as the country affords ; but much more surprising does it seem that any one should be sinful, when joys of such a chaste and holy character are open to him. It seems like polluting some holy place, to corrupt the country with evil thoughts, wicked imaginations, and degrading desires. It seems as if the young and gladsome bird, which might dwell amongst the green trees and the waving branches, should choose rather to fall down and perish in some foul pool beneath. Its song might have risen to heaven, and raised with it the minds of all who heard it to think upon the higher joys that there awaited them, if thither they could attain ; but as it is, it only makes a sound of death, which may indeed be heard by many, but which only shows that it has fallen from its destined elevation, and is about to perish altogether.

“ But all this must not hinder me from speaking to the man whom I have been contemplating, as I would fain believe him not to be so far fallen as to be unable to be reasoned with and benefited : I suppose a case utterly hopeless seldom occurs ; and certainly we should at no time assume that such an instance is before us.

“ ‘ How can you,’ I ask,—and I speak to him with a very serious tone and manner,—‘ how can you thus blight,’—(I use this word *blight*, for I think that, if he could but enter fully into a country comparison, there

might yet be some hope of him,)—‘how can you thus blight the hopes and the wishes of your friends?’

“‘I have no friends,’ he answers me:—mournful sentence!

“‘Nay, nay!’ I answer, ‘you may fancy so, perhaps; but such cannot surely be the case?’

“‘I have no friends,’ is his reiterated reply.

“‘It is then, I presume, because you are unworthy of any: if you choose to be hopelessly bad, and continue in courses such as must shut you out from respectable society, and from all sympathy, you have but yourself to blame. You must abide by the consequences of your own conduct.’

“‘Ah, Sir,’ he replies, very slowly and very faintly, ‘I am not so bad as you think me. I *am* very bad, yet I am not *so* bad as people suppose me. I was wild when I was a boy, and so were a great many others in a higher station than myself, who now are quite run after as great men, and good men, and all that.’

“‘If you had given up your wildness, and taken to a different sort of life, I have no doubt people would have regarded you favourably, the same as they do those to whom you have alluded.’

“‘No, Sir! no; as soon as it was known abroad that I was gay in my way of life, all who had noticed me before cast me off for ever. I was a bad fellow, they said; and they took care that I should continue so, for they took away from me the means of being good, and earning my bread in a decent and honest way. I had been gay from choice; I became vicious from force: they called me a lost fellow—they called me then what I really am now. I was not so much to blame as they say I was, Sir; for how could they expect me to reform (as they said that I ought), when my repentance would have done good to no one earthly creature,—when there would not have been joy even on earth over the sinner that repented?’

“‘Your very allusion,’ said I, ‘shows you remember there is a great Being whom you ought to have sought to please, and whose favour must be of infinite importance and value to you; whilst the regard of mere men is of trivial benefit, even in its best estate.’

“‘It is all true, Sir; but I am a low man, with little teaching and little sense; and why should I be wiser than my betters?’

“And thus, indeed, it is, in too many cases; people who once commit an error, if they be in an humble condition, are seldom taken into favour and patronised again. Yet, what can be more unjust and uncharitable? ‘To err is human;’ and it should ever be so considered and so treated. A boy commits a fault,—such as the purloining of some toy or trifle,—and he is immediately sent on board a ship: as if, because the devil has once entered into him, he must go and perish (for there are no higher hopes or wishes entertained for him) in the sea. It is as much the duty of each

man to forgive a fault in another, as to avoid it in his own case. Alas! of what avail would the knowledge of the infinite purity of the Deity be to us, if His pardoning mercy were not also another of His characteristics? This great Being is, in all respects, to be our Exemplar, as well as our Friend and Father.

"But I should wear out your patience altogether, (and indeed I have tried it enough already,) if I were to go on with a description of all the persons who might be collected together at such a levee.

"I must conclude, and apologize for my having so far detained you and that, too, on the very last evening which I am (I regret to say it) to spend in your company; for to-morrow I must go to a large manufacturing town at some distance from this; so I must lament having filled up so much of this evening with fancies of my own, which will, most probably, come to nothing."

Upon this, Vincent and his wife, and the medical gentleman, began to express their sorrow at the idea of my quitting them; and their regret was, I believe, more genuine than such lamentations usually are after a guest has been staying for so lengthened a period as that for which I had been tarrying in their rural village. I told them, that, much as I regretted it, I could not avoid my departure, and entreated that, on this last evening, somebody else would undertake the remaining portion of the conversation.

"I will read you a paper which I wrote some time ago," said the Doctor, "if that will suit you; but I have no wish to make an author of myself, or to pretend to be a literary character."

This proposition was readily assented to and approved of; and the Doctor said,—

"Before I begin, let me tell you that I am not out of your way of thinking, in taking the most miserable subjects for my theme; and, in fact, that I think I have got hold of a man more wretched than any you have in your whole catalogue of the unfortunate."

"Impossible!" cried Vincent: "I defy the most expert magician in the world to conjure up anything more dull and dismal than my unhappy friend here. It is utterly impossible! No; our dear friend has the *most* gloomy mind that man ever possessed. I shall be glad, however, to hear what you can possibly think a sadder subject than any my friend chooses for his themes, as he makes all his men old, and poor, and ill."

"There is one point," replied the medical man, "of peculiar misery; and this it was that suggested to me the paper which I am about, by your permission, to read to you. The being whom I conceive as most surely and lamentably careworn, is he who finds no sympathising and pitying heart,—no bosom which ever beats responsively to his own: such a wretch is more afflicted than poverty, distress, and illness can ever make him. 'Give me any pain,' said the wise son of Sirach, 'but the pain of the mind.' As a doctor, I may be allowed to testify to the great injury which

this feeling of want of sympathy has upon the body, and how the bodily frame of man is destroyed by the mental anguish he endures.

"I will, then, if you will allow me, give my sketch a heading, which may serve to place it amongst our friend's MSS. at some future time."

"I will add it with pleasure," I replied, "if you will let me have it after you have read it to the assembled company; but pray let us hear it at once."

"I will denominate my sketch, then,

THE UNCARED FOR.

"I was once wandering along in the streets of the great city of England, when I fell in with a man who was tottering on his way, his whole weight supported by two crutches of shabby appearance, and which seemed almost ready to break with the burthen they had to bear up. As he came near to me, he spoke in a very low tone of voice, and I was at a loss to distinguish the words which he uttered. I thought that he was asking



for relief, as I did not know what else he could be wishing to say to me; but, till I was sure that such was the case, I did not like to offer him money, fearing, that, should he not have asked for alms, he might be offended, and his feelings hurt, at my taking him for a beggar. I therefore drew him gently out of the great thoroughfare, and then begged him to tell me what it was that he had said to me before.

"'I asked a blessing,' he replied.

"I was a little astonished at such a request, and doubted whether he did not use such a word as another term for a gift of money. I requested him to explain what he meant by 'a blessing;' but, instead of answering my question, he fixed himself against a blank wall, which was on one side of the street down which I had brought him, leaned his head upon the top of one of his crutches, and mournfully uttered,—

"'Forgive me if I ask the blessing which thou wilt not give.'

"'I have no wish,' said I, interposing, 'to deny anything which you ask of me; but the request seems so strange an one, that I hardly know what to make of it. Had you asked me for money, I should not have denied it to you, and should have readily understood the reason of such a petition; but a blessing, from a stranger, is so little valued by any one, that I can even now scarcely imagine your meaning.

"'Forgive me,' he repeated again, 'if I ask the blessing which thou wilt not give. I seek for hearts to feel kindly to *me*, and I find them not. This has been the fond and disappointing object of my whole life's search. I have known the utter misery of existence; to toil along the bleak and barren journey of life without a friend to speak his regard, and charm my barren way. I could walk willingly—most willingly—through the gloomy vale of death, if one pitying eye looked amid its dark recesses. But such is not my doom: whom do I find to sympathise with me, and grieve for the pain which I endure? Not one! Not one! I have hopes born ever to die, and yet—strange contradiction—born deathless. No one ever cares to exert himself for my benefit,—no one troubles himself to consider what I should like, or what I should disapprove. My fellow-men look upon me as a mere nonentity; and though they do not injure or oppress me, they do nothing *for my sake*, which, to my spirit, is worse—infinately worse—than aggression.

"'My mind finds no rest, although my judgment tells me that this rest is necessary for my peace, and that I am a fool in not finding it. My mind, like that of Adam, is full of perpetual desire—but, alas! no deep sleep of rest falls upon me, as upon him, for no help is found for *me*. It seems as if it were decreed that I should go forward, ever anxiously seeking, and ever meeting with disappointment and dismay. The flower which I desire to gather grows far beyond my feeble grasp. The fruit which would gratify my palate and cool my parched tongue crowns the topmost height of some lofty tree.

"'I have never coveted wealth, although I have been badly off for a series of years; I have never desired fame, although I have been railled against and despised; I have never wished for rank, though I have been called a beggar and an outcast. But I have sought one thing with deep and earnest longing—and that one boon hath been a congenial soul. But when I have vented in words my fervent aspiration, I have listened in dismay to my own voice, as it rose upon the wind cheerless and *alone*. It

seemed to speak the doom which awaited me, and to declare that, in spite of my prayers, I should ever go through life unblessed by a sympathising mind, or a friend who cared for me. Ay, I have been brought to prayer by the want of friends, as others have been by the possession of them. For we have all seen how earnestly men who never supplicated in this manner before, will fall upon their knees, when those whom they love, and who love them, are in sickness, or are absent from them, journeying over distant lands, or ploughing the stormy main.

“‘Did you ever see,’ said he, turning towards me with a vehemence that made me start back from him, and almost tremble before a weak and aged man,—‘did you ever see a murderer in a court of justice?’

“The remark paralysed me at the moment, for I was struck with horror at the idea that probably the person now before me had stained his hand in the blood of his fellow-man. He perceived what I thought, and he hastened to explain himself.

“‘Fear me not,—I am no murderer; I never wished to injure one creature that moves on the face of the whole earth. But, tell me, did you ever see a murderer in a court of justice?’

“I replied that I had done so; but that the sight was one so painful and harassing to me, that I hoped I should never witness it again, and that certainly, unless in the course of duty, I would not do so.’

“‘When you beheld the murderer at the bar,’ he continued, “did you not observe him looking round from side to side, here and there, hither and thither? And you fancied he saw before him the crowded court, the judge, the counsel, and the jury, like masses of dark cloud—dark to him in all things—with the certainty of its bursting in ruin over his now devoted head. You think that he marks nothing but the mass of misery to himself, which dooms him to destruction—a destruction, too, which the man knows that he deserves, and from which escape is impossible. You believe that he gazes with a shivering dread on the figure of the judge, stern in that justice which it is the glory of our judges to administer equally and indifferently to all,—on the form of the counsel, as he rises up to accuse him,—and on the persons of the jury, as they sit like awful witnesses of his long hidden guilt. You fancy these are the things he sees before him. But it is not so: he sees nothing of the crowd before him, although amongst that multitude are those who are to seal his destiny, and send him from that world which his crimes have disgraced. He sees one bright ray—he sees the ray from the eye that seeks *him*, with its deep and unchanging love,—the eye that seeks *him*—the world’s outcast, the malefactor—the wretch who is about to swing from the gallows-tree, and to be hooted at by the low rabble that are ever congregated together at such places.

“‘Who,’ said he, still more energetically, his voice rising higher and higher as he spoke the words,—‘who can estimate the value of that ray to him? It is like a ray descending from heaven amid the clouds and thick

darkness, to tell him that there is still pity and affection even for the hated and the abhorred. It were worth worlds to him, if he had worlds to offer; and the pleasure of his release, were he that moment offered his freedom, and rescued from the death which is about to overtake him, would be derived from the knowledge that his future existence would be brightened by the same fond eye which is upon him as he stands a felon at the bar of his country. Now, let us think of what the cell of a murderer must be—if an innocent man can conceive of aught so dreadful. Let us imagine, if we can in any degree, what it must be to spend the *night* in such a cell. How must the guilty and hapless wretch fancy, in the deep and dark retirement of that cell, that he sees the eye of the murdered victim fixed upon him, as if it would reproach him throughout eternity! And how must he clasp, with outstretched arms, the hard seat which is put near to where he lies grovelling on the ground,—or the table on which his food is placed,—in an agony that knows no mastery, as he perceives the eye of the victim, penetrating through stone walls and iron fastenings, to settle upon the MURDERER! The universe, placed between the victim and the slayer, could not prevent the piercing of that eye; nor could the ocean, were it lavished upon it, dim its brightness nor tarnish its brilliancy. The iron bars which are around him seem also to confine within them the penetrating glance of that eye, rather than to prevent its entrance.

“ He fancies that the waters of destruction are ready to bear him where there is no landing-place, although there are strong winds and seas! He dreads, that he may meet in another world the victim whom he has sacrificed in this; and then almost delights himself (horrible to say!) with the idea that he has but little chance of doing so, as he is going to that place where the lot of the murderer must be very different from that of his innocent victim; and widely are the good and the evil severed apart. The great gulf fixed between them is an everlasting barrier against their coming in contact, and it seems a horrible comfort to him to think of the yawning chasm, which, under any other circumstances, would affright and paralyse him. Oh! the murderer dreads the consciousness—from which he cannot escape—of the victim's eye, far more than the scaffold and the scorn.

“ But when the manslayer is in this state of great and bitter misery, then in memory he conjures up one whom he loves in deep and abiding confidence, and who loves him with an equal fervour and an equal truth; and he knows, as certainly as that death and punishment await him, that, when the morning's sun shall rise, she will seek out his cell, and, as the mightiest boon she can crave, will ask for a sight of him whom the whole world despises, and the executioner is about to offer at the shrine of Justice. He sees in fancy the fair and gentle dove, which he has been the means of sending from a comfortable home and friendly

shelter, to wander over the wide and troubled waves of the world's cares and sorrows; and upon what errand does she come to him? It is to bear to him who sent her forth from her safe and quiet ark, the olive-branch of peace.—And thus, Oh, murderer! even thou in thy dismal cell,—with the sound of the gallows, erecting for thee, already sounding in thine ear,—with the prospect of being hooted at by the infuriated and brutalized populace,—with the thought of being buried as an outcast and a miscreant in the range of the prison, far from the holy sanctuary where thy fathers repose in honoured grass-grown graves,—with all those various things to mark thy just punishment and curse, even thou hast one comfort which is denied to me! for there is one who makes thy woes her own, who feels more for thee than thou canst possibly feel for thyself, and who, when she leaves this world, will die with thy name engraven upon her inmost heart!—whilst I, who seek every man's good, and no man's woe,—who weep over the fly which inadvertently I have injured,—I dwell in a world ungladdened by one ray even of that brightness which I myself have caused!—for the time has been that I have thrown a cheerful light over the cottage home,—I have caused it to rest upon the head of the aged pauper,—I have conveyed it to the cell of the prisoner, the dungeon of the debtor, and the abode of the widow and the fatherless,—and I have returned back to my own roof, to find nothing under it but darkness and the shadow of deathlike melancholy.

“ ‘How sad my fate, testify my bleeding heart! testify, my sorrowing mind, my ruined health, and blighted spirits!’—Testify, all of ye, with voices of solemn sadness and abiding wretchedness! Raise your voices high, to bear witness to the terrible truthfulness of my recital.

“ ‘There is no flying from self, excepting by flying to those who care for one and pity one: this is the sole solace and joy of life, and for this I seek, and seek in vain!

“ ‘My nightly dream, and my waking remembrance, are ever that I am not loved! I cannot call in reason to my aid; it is useless for me to fly to it for solace and relief; for the voice of Reason is the voice of Truth, and the voice of Truth says I am not loved.

“ ‘Where shall I seek a companion to cheer me in my woes, to assuage, or rather to remove, my troubles? I know not where to look, or whither to turn. All men deny me the comfort I ask, and the friendship which my heart sighs after. Earth, air, and sea, have no similarity to me—no companionship in my woes and sorrows. I am desolate—utterly alone. The elements have their strife, but they have also their peace and their happiness. Feel for me, Sir! if you pity the most miserable in his state of woe. If you sympathise with the veriest wretch lying upon his bed of straw, or writhing in the cell of the maniac, bound with fetters of iron to restrain his agitated limbs—feel more, infinitely more, for me; for infinitely more do I suffer!

“‘Earth, air, and sea, have no similarity to me—no companionship in my woes and sorrows. Earth enshrines in her bosom many who have loved, full ardently and well, the native land in which they now repose in undiminished glory. Earth hath these her lovers close to her, in an union which is not easily dissolved. Those who now sleep in her bosom, sang of her praises as long as they had one breath with which to utter them: and they willingly laid down their lives for the sake of the land which gave them birth, and in which their affections centred.

“‘Earth, air, and sea, have no similarity to me—no companionship in my woes and sorrows. The Air, as she passes on her free and gladsome course, mingles herself with the happy song of those who love to breathe the fresh gale in the pure and open Creation!

“‘How many men, penned up in close and heated rooms for six days out of the seven, forced to sit at their looms, without aught to cheer them in their dull and monotonous employment, look forward to the idea of the open air on one day in the week, with all the warmth and passion of a lover’s tender devotion! Would, blessed Air, that I had aught of resemblance to thee, or of fellowship in thy joys!

“‘Earth, air, and sea, have no similarity to me—no companionship in my woes and sorrows. The sea, which carries along whole fleets mountain high upon her stormy and crested waves, yet, in her fond love, glides softly and gently under those who delight in her—how many seek her that they may gaze with sympathising enjoyment on her heart-stirring sports, and listen with transport to her native and glorious melodies! Oh! would blessed sea, that I had aught of resemblance to thee, or of fellowship in thy joys!’

“The unhappy man, having thus expressed the miserable feeling which he so vividly experienced, turned from me and passed on his way. He did not offer to shake hands with me, nor did he look as if he could venture to expect any sympathy from me. Bitter disappointment had so long been familiar to him, that he hardly dared to hope that any living being would extend the pity of which he stood so much in need.

“On he went, to think in solitude of griefs from the effects of which he was fast declining in health, and was sinking to a cheerless and solitary grave—a grave most unhappy and most lonely, as no person would ever bend his steps thither to weep over the ashes of him who slept below the green-grass mound—a wretch—uncared for!

“And now,” said the Doctor, “I think you will own that, whilst you are fond of sketching the woes and griefs of those who are deprived of the comforts of a soft bed, a meat dinner, and a warm covering,—I think you must allow that I have designed one man (to speak as an artist) who is much more pitiable than any of them. There is no grief like the grief of the mind, my friend; and how little are the rich and the noble exempted from this sad lot! Beneath the gilded roof, and the fretted dome, often-

times is to be found the man who sighs over unrequited affection, and sheds such bitter tears as the sufferer from mere bodily starving and destitution never knew. Pity, if you will,—for they deserve your pity.—all those who meet with the privations and calamities arising from poverty; but pity, most of all, the sorrows of those whose minds are to them a living and quenchless curse.”

As those who were then gathered together at the Parsonage were so very soon to be scattered far and wide apart, we resolved not to break up the meeting very speedily, but to continue our conversation round the table till a late hour. So we sat on and on, and livelier and happier subjects were started, with a view, especially, to banish the feelings which oppressed our minds. How often, when the last evening friends can spend together arrives, are a thousand subjects started, merely for the sake of prolonging the intercourse, although the speakers can hardly discourse upon any of them, their minds being so much occupied with the subject of the approaching parting!

My destination, upon leaving Vincent, was, as I believe I have twice before told my readers, to a large manufacturing town in the north of England; and Vincent told me that, before I went to a place where I should see nothing but smoking chimneys and dull dingy streets, he must take me with him round the parish,—the pretty parish over which he presided.—It would, he said, show me so great a contrast as would readily determine me to return and give him another visit.

I was quite sure that, when Vincent talked of delighting any one with a walk round the parish, he meant to carry them to each cottage which that village contained, for in such visits he diffused joy wherever he went, causing the eyes of the poor who dwelt there to brighten at his entrance. Happy he who, like Vincent, is pleasing himself, whilst he ministers to the gratification of those around him; and, like the bee with the sweets which he himself loves to sip, lays up a store of pleasure for others!

Well, then, the morning before I quitted the Parsonage, we took the anticipated walk. How did the little children flock around their friend as he passed along the village! each girl had her curtsy for him, and each boy had his ready bow; and both girls and boys had those smiles which declared that the curtsies and bows were not the forced acknowledgment of those who were obliged to show deference to their minister, but the outward mark of the real regard and respect they entertained for him. The very dogs were gladdened with Vincent's approach, for he knew the name of every one, and had a kind word for each.

And truly he who pauses on his way for the sake of patting the cheek of the child who is toddling along, or the head of the dog which is slumbering by his master's door, comes nearer to my heart than many a man great in famous deeds, and celebrated for glorious achievements. It was a delightful sight to behold Vincent in the cottages of his humble parishion-

ers. The face of the old man, who was almost imbecile, brightened as Vincent came in ; and the old woman, who was sitting by the side of the fireplace, (winter and summer her accustomed seat,) rose up, and, resting upon her stick, faltered forth, with emphatic, though feeble accents, the expression of the pleasure which she felt. To each of these ancient ones, Vincent had the benevolent inquiry how they got on?—whether they had had *that* blanket yet, or would like some more of *that* broth? and the manner in which these gifts were alluded to—so unostentatiously, and so simply—heightened the obligation which he was conferring upon the poor old people. The blessings of the old couple were given to him as he left ; and I doubt not for one instant that those blessings were effectual.

When we had to enter the room of any one who needed to be reasoned with, seriously and calmly, upon the evil courses which he pursued, the scene was well-nigh as gratifying as that which I beheld in the chambers of the virtuous and the good ; for so kindly did Vincent address such an one,—so persuasively did he argue,—that we rarely left the cottage without having perceived a dawning of amendment in the erring brother whose cottage he had sought. There was nothing to offend in Vincent's remonstrances,—there was no harshness, no bitterness, no coldness expressed towards the sinner whom he addressed ; he came and he spoke to him as his minister, and in that office he included, and delighted to include, the consoler and the friend. I say the consoler, for Vincent loved ever to couple mercy with judgment when he talked ; and whilst he denounced the “ woe ” against the impenitent, he invariably declared, also, that if the sinner would turn from his unrighteous ways, forgiveness and a blessing yet awaited him.

There was yet one place where it was still more beautiful to see my friend,—in the room of the sick and the dying. How did the pale face of the invalid light up as he approached her humble couch ! whilst he asked after her health in such a way as showed that he really felt for the pain which she endured. His conversations on religion were doubly effectual, for she knew that her sacred adviser was one who felt personal regard and friendship for her, and that his wishes must indeed be to serve her interests, and promote her welfare.

The dying man felt a clearer light come over his mind, and a fuller hope over his path, as Vincent drew near to him ; and he drank in—as a thirsty traveller would from a clear stream in a barren land—the draught of consolation which Vincent knew he might safely administer, and which therefore he came prepared to offer to him. He seemed to the dying man to withdraw the veil which separated earth from heaven, and to show him, ere he quitted the former, the peace and blessedness of the latter.

Oh ! happy are the villagers who are attended to by such a minister as him whom I am proud to call my friend ! The way to heaven is pointed

out to them by the same hand which conveys bodily food when they are hungry, and medicine for their ailments when they are ill. Every inducement is thereby afforded them to heed his virtuous lessons; for motives of gratitude towards their pastor must influence them, as well as those of duty.

Love to their minister first teaches them the higher love due to Him of whom he is the servant and the follower. The cords which bind them to their religion may indeed be the cords of a man,—yet these cords are moved by that invisible hand which directs the godly man in the way wherein he should go.

The village life, which has to them been ever one of happiness and peace, leads to a life of infinitely more happiness, and of unchanging peace. The valley of the shadow of death has no darkness for them, for it is light from the brightness adorning either end!

I left the village with a heavy heart; and as I rode away from the Parsonage-house I often turned round to catch a glimpse of the church where I had loved to hear the accents of truth from the lips of my friend, and of the house where dwelt some of the best and purest of earth's creatures. Alas! who is there who cannot understand what were then my feelings? Who is there who has not had to weep over the necessity of parting, even from those in whom his very soul seemed locked up? and at such a moment to feel that this world offers no true joys to man, when such separations ever interrupt his social and domestic happiness? It has been said, "Life is made up of partings." Reader! let me cherish the hope, in closing this volume, that you will entertain some pleasant recollection of one with whom you have now known some months of kindly intercourse. I do not, for an instant, expect you to grieve over our temporary separation; but I *do* hope that you may remember me as a friend, and may say—"Whatever the writer's abilities may be, he wishes the welfare and happiness of the meanest, as well as the greatest, of his fellow-creatures."

END OF THE FIRST SERIES.

